

RETURN of SATAN by ROBERT MOORE WILLIAM

See
BACK
COVER

AMAZING STORIES

OCTOBER 1938

VOLUME 13
NUMBER 10

AMAZING STORIES

OCTOBER
1938



HISTORY IN REVERSE
Original Radio Script
Suppressed by CBS!
COMPLETE! UNEXPURGATED!

IF YOU WANT RELIEF FROM DANDRUFF ... GRASP THESE VITAL DANDRUFF FACTS!



1 A GERM CAUSES DANDRUFF: Sensational new scientific research has discovered and proved that dandruff is a germ disease. It is caused by a queer, microscopic, bottle-shaped germ—*Pityrosporum ovale*. When these germs multiply excessively, dandruff is usually in evidence. When they are killed, dandruff disappears.



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Radio broadcasting stations employ engineers, operators, station managers and pay well for trained men. Fixing Radio sets in spare time pays many \$200 to \$500 a year—full time jobs with Radio jobbers, manufacturers and dealers as much as \$30, \$50, \$75 a week. Many Radio Experts open full or part time Radio sales and repair businesses. Radio manufacturers and jobbers employ testers, inspectors, foremen, engineers, servicemen, in good-pay jobs with opportunities for advancement. Automobile, police, aviation, commercial Radio, loud speaker systems are newer fields offering good opportunities now and for the future. Television promises to open many good jobs soon. Men I trained have good jobs in these branches of Radio. Read how they got their jobs. Mail coupon.

Why Many Radio Experts Make \$30, \$50, \$75 a Week

Radio is young—yet it's one of our large industries. More than 26,000,000 homes have one or more Radios. There are more Radios than telephones. Every year millions of Radios get out of date and are replaced. Millions more need new tubes, repairs. Over 450,000,000 are spent every year for Radio repairs alone. Over 5,000,000 auto Radios are in use; more are being sold every day, offering more profit-making opportunities for Radio experts. AND RADIO IS STILL YOUNG, GROWING, expanding into new fields. The few hundred \$30, \$50, \$75 a week jobs of 20 years ago have grown to thousands. Yes. Radio offers opportunities—now and for the future!

Many Make \$5, \$10, \$15 a Week Extra in Spare Time While Learning

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Act Today. Mail the coupon now for sample lesson and 64-page book. They point out Radio's spare time and full time opportunities and those coming in Television; tell about my training in Radio and Television; show you letters from men I trained, telling what they are doing and earning. Find out what Radio offers YOU! MAIL COUPON in an envelope, or paste on a postcard—NOW!

J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 9JM
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

MAIL COUPON NOW!



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J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 9JM
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

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OCTOBER
1939

VOLUME 13
NUMBER 10

AMAZING STORIES

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1939

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Volume XIII
Number 10

The OBSERVATORY

by THE Editor

THE July 10 issue of *Time* features an article on science fiction magazines, and the science fiction convention, held July 2, 3 and 4, at New York. Reproduced is the cover of the August issue of *AMAZING STORIES* and quoted are such science fiction celebrities as Ray Cummings, who said: "It is astonishing how many things come true," referring to the predictions of science fiction writers in their stories; Leo Margulies, New York editor, who said: "I am astonished. I didn't think you boys could be so damn sincere." And science fiction fan Will S. Sykora, who proclaimed: "Let us all work to see that the things we read in science fiction become realities."

What with Orson Welles, the World Science Fiction Convention, and movies such as *The Invisible Man*, science fiction is becoming one of the news features of the day.

AS a sidelight on this news event, your editors were visited by fans from all over the country, passing through Chicago enroute to the convention. Forrest J. Ackerman, and feminine fan Morojo (a name devised through an avid connection with Esperanto work) stopped in from Hollywood; Chicago fans Mark Reinsberg, Erle Korschak (who represented *AMAZING STORIES* and *FANTASTIC ADVENTURES* at the convention), and others. *AMAZING's* editors are proud to be the publishers of a magazine with such eager and energetic readers. We are certain no other type of pulp fiction can command such activities from its readers.

WITH this issue, we give you the most unique story we have ever published. "History in Reverse," by Lee Laurence, is presented in its original radio script form, exactly as written for CBS. Your editors were fascinated by the script, and impressed with its suspense, and its clarity of presentation. We know, that beyond its interest as a suppressed radio script, its excellence as a time-travelling story will entrance you. It is one of the most fascinating time-travel yarns we've had the extremely good fortune to be able to

read in many a moon, and perhaps, if the readers approve, we can prevail upon Lee Laurence to provide more of the same, in either radio script form, or straight story form. Certainly, for a writer new to science fiction, this is a first class effort.

DUE to the letters pouring in on Alexander M. Phillips' story "Beast of the Island," in our last issue, and Richard O. Lewis' "The Fate Changer" we are presenting several more off-trail stories in this issue. We might point out Nelson S. Bond's "The Priestess Who Rebelled," as a "different" yarn, and one that

AMAZING STORIES is proud to present as the finest hit, to date, of an author you'll hear great things about in the future. Another unusual story is Binder's "The Missing Year." However, we feel that if you can select the lead story in this issue without much trouble, you are an extremely astute science fiction reader, because we confidentially believe we've gathered together an issue



"Mr. Hawk Carse? Here's a summons. Be in Brooklyn court 9 A.M. Monday, or else . . . !"

that will delight you from cover to cover.

FOR several hundred years woorali was just a South American Indian arrow poison. A very good poison, too, belonging to the strychnine family and producing respiratory paralysis—followed very shortly by death. Then, less than two years ago it went scientific and became curare. Alias the Dr. Jekyll-Mr. Hyde drug. For it was discovered that, taken digestively, woorali—beg pardon, curare—produced a dual personality!

Now, after long experiments, the way in which it produces this remarkable effect has been verified. The cortex of the brain is the part of the higher nervous system in charge of learning. Curare depresses it, and you forget all you ever learned!

But the lower nervous system of the spine carries on. So to speak, while your brain takes a nap you learn with your back.

Only trouble is, you can't remember any of that when the curare wears off!

SOMEONE with a lot of time on his hands has figured out what it would cost if the Earth had to pay for its sunlight. And it's a good thing old Sol doesn't send us a bill!

A beam of sunlight striking the surface of the earth at right angles produces heat at the rate of about 1800 calories a minute per square foot. The mechanical equivalent of this heat is the energy needed to raise thirty pounds three feet in one second! It is sufficient power to light and keep burning continuously two 60-watt incandescent lamps!

This power flow amounts to nearly 5,000,000 horsepower per square mile. Paid for at 2c a kilowatt hour, a moderate price for energy in electric form, the sunlight received by the whole earth would cost a billion dollars a second!

On top of this, we get only about one part in two billion of the radiation the sun sends in all directions. What a loss of income for Solar Power & Light, Inc.!

NEWEST and neatest trick of science is photographing the human voice.

And what the camera reveals about certain

European dictators!

Basis of the method is an instrument called the vibrograph. Pulsations of air pressure produced in speaking are transformed by it into pulsations of electric energy. These are in turn transformed by an oscillograph into a fluctuating beam of light. When the movements of the beam are photographed, you have an "oscillogram"—a picture of a sound wave!

Analysis of the oscillogram reveals the true characteristics of the voice. And the speaker.

For example, in ordinary conversational speech, the average man's voice is pitched around the second C below middle C. This represents about 130 vibrations a second. But President

Roosevelt, in his public addresses, averages 160 vibrations per second. The rise in pitch is due to the emphasis of emotion.

Not such emotion, however, as is indicated by Mussolini's 190! That is emotional frenzy.

As for Hitler, well . . . Der Fuehrer's voice customarily vibrates some 232 times a second! Which pitches it just between anger—and fear!

HERE'S big news! THE NEW ADAM will be offered to the science fiction public in September! Here's what several

prominent science fictioners say about it:

A. Merritt. "... Stanley was big enough—or perhaps I had better put it that he would have been big enough—to have far outshadowed Cabell who, after all, has written and still writes only one story. And I like Cabell very much."

Edgar Rice Burroughs. "It is probably the strangest manuscript I have ever read; and I believe that it will prove very interesting to dyed-in-the-wool sciencefiction readers."

Ralph Milne Farley. "... conceded by all who have read it to be Weinbaum's outstanding masterpiece. . . . This is a literary event of the first magnitude . . . all his writings held deep gripping significance, while still remaining light whimsical yarns, without any tinge of preachment. . . . "New Adam" represents the crowning achievement of this formula."

Watch for complete details next month!

Rap



"What the heck's the matter with you guys?
Ain't you never seen a flat tire before?"

HISTORY



BY LEE LAURENCE

ORCHESTRA: *(Introduction . . . Segue to Sustained Chord)*

ANNOUNCER: The Workshop Program!

ORCHESTRA: *(A Quick Wipe Out of Chord)*

SOUND: *Background Noises of Hollywood Premiere . . . Theatre Foyer*

NILES: Good evening, everyone. This is Ken Niles speaking to you from the foyer of Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, where the whole world is expectantly awaiting the release of H. G. Wells' "Outline of History" as filmed by World Wide Pictures Incorporated. This is the event the entire

work has been anticipating ever since the day that World-Wide prexy, Alexander Carman, announced his purchase of the great book by the noted English historian. On an earlier broadcast, only a few minutes ago, we interviewed the stars of this picture as they entered the theatre and realized for the first time how little they themselves knew of its production. "Outline of History" has been a two-man job from start to finish—the work of Alexander Carman, President of World Wide Pictures, and Bill Hughes, their chief cameraman. Hughes, himself, did not put in an appearance tonight and it is rumored that he has not been seen at the studio for



in **REVERSE**

Time turns back! Here is the incredible story CBS dared not broadcast. The complete script, unexpurgated, exactly as written.

more than a month. Carman himself made the arrangements for releasing this great picture simultaneously in Hollywood, New York, Chicago, London, Paris, Rome, Berlin and Moscow. Within the next few minutes secret operatives of the company will deliver the film in sealed containers and at the same instant, other prints will be delivered to the projection machine operators in each theatre where it is being previewed. There, other representatives of World Wide will break the seals and the World Wide preview will begin.

SOUND: *Siren Drawing Near*

NILES: The armed escort bearing the prints for Grauman's Chinese is coming down Hollywood Boulevard and is stopping in front of the theatre. A cordon of police is breaking a path through the crowd and the containers themselves are being unloaded. Soon the world will witness a picture that heretofore only two men have seen in its entirety. And now I must leave for my seat inside the theatre. Just two hours from now in another broadcast I shall

give you a full report on the picture. This is Ken Niles, speaking from Hollywood.

ORCHESTRA: (*Builds to Big Climax . . . Hold Chord Throughout Following for Montage Effect*)

NEWSBOY: Extra! Extra! Read all all about it! Panic in theatres follows showing of "Outline of History." Extra . . . paper!

SOUND: *Motor Running*

POLICE RADIO: Calling all cars in Hollywood area . . . All Hollywood cars. Proceed at once to Grauman's Chinese Theatre . . . restore order. Calling General Hospital . . . Calling General Hospital. . . . (*Fade*)

SOUND: *Traffic Background*

NEWSBOY: Extra paper!

POLICE RADIO: Calling all cars!

SOUND: *Policeman's Whistle . . . Siren*

ORCHESTRA: (*Build to Overall Climax and Out . . . Pause*)

SOUND: *Door Flung Abruptly Open*

CAST: (*Men's Voices in Angry Mood . . . About Six Men*)

SECRETARY: (*Protesting*) But, gentlemen! —Mr. Carman is busy . . . I'm sure . . .

SPENCER: (*Breaking Past*) Oh, he'll see us all right!

CAST: (*Chorus Agreement*)

SECRETARY: But, Mr. Spencer—

CARMAN: (*Off Mike a Little*) That's all right, Miss Wade . . . I'll see them!

SPENCER: You're blamed well right you'll see us, Carman.

CARMAN: (*Calmly*) In fact, I've rather been expecting you.

KIRKMAN: See here, Carman! You've—

CARMAN: (*Rising*) Now just a second, gentlemen. (*Pause*) If you'll find chairs and be seated we'll discuss this matter quietly. (*Somewhat Tired*)

After all, I've been through a lot of this last year and I'm in no mood to argue with you.

SPENCER: (*Threatening*) Oh, you'll talk to us all right! You'll tell us—

VOICES: You bet you will!—It's our right!—etc.

CARMAN: Gentlemen! Gentlemen!

VOICES: (*Quiet*)

CARMAN: Miss Wade, please see that we're not disturbed . . . and call Dr. Thorndyke for me—I . . . I need a stimulant.

MISS WADE: Yes, Mr. Carman.

SOUND: *Door Closes*

CARMAN: (*After Pause*) Well, gentlemen—?

KIRKMAN: (*Demanding*) See here, Alex, we've just come from your preview of "Outline of History." Where did you get those shots?

CARMAN: Some of them I made—here in my studio.

KIRKMAN: (*Raging*) You know what we mean! Where'd you get those shots of the Roman Coliseum?

SPENCER: Where'd you photograph those prehistoric animals?

VOICE: How did you make those pictures of Columbus?

VOICE 2: . . . and the Battle of Hastings! Where'd you get that?

CAST VOICES: *Build to a Climax*

KIRKMAN: (*Demanding Quiet*) Wait a minute, men! (*To Carman*) Alex, we've a right to know how and where you took those pictures! They weren't miniatures and they weren't sets—where did you get them?

CARMAN: (*Toying With Them*) Oh! So you liked those pictures of the post-glacial period, eh, and those of Cheops building his pyramid?

SPENCER: We're not here to talk, Carman, we want to know how you did it! That picture will mean the ruination of all our studios. We can't compete with you on that basis unless we

know where and how you took those shots. The actors and the rest of the cast were superimposed, we know that—ordinary process work—but those originals—how were they taken?

CARMAN: (*Sighing*) Well, I suppose I'll have to tell you sometime, it might as well be now—(*Laugh*) But I warn you—you won't believe me.

SPENCER: Humph! Leave that to us.

CARMAN: Gentlemen, those pictures were, as you've no doubt guessed, originals—*made at the time!*

VOICES: (*React Quickly*) Tommyrot!—He's lying!—You expect us to believe that?—He's stalling us—He's protecting his process! Etc. . . .

CARMAN: (*Waits Till Voices Subside*) There! You see? You don't believe me.

KIRKMAN: (*Scoffing*) Why should we? Made at the time. Poppycock!

SPENCER: (*Laugh*) I can just see a caveman grinding away with a camera five hundred thousand years ago. (*Laughs*).

CARMAN: (*Seriously* I can well understand your skepticism, gentlemen, but, those pictures you saw were made by Bill Hughes—my ace cameraman—five hundred thousand years ago.

VOICE: (*Really React This Time*) "The man's mad!"—"It's preposterous!" "He's crazy!" Etc. . . .

SPENCER: (*Breaking In*) No, he isn't, men! He's lying—covering up!

CARMAN: (*Shrugging*) See, you don't believe me. (*Laughs*) And I can't say that I blame you.

SPENCER: (*Changes His Tone*) Look, Alex, we've been friends for years, you and I—and some of the rest of these fellows. We've tackled the problems of the industry together—we've stood shoulder to shoulder through a lot of crises. We've a right to know how you made those pictures. Your patents will be respected—you're

entitled to what royalties you wish from the method—but the process should be made available to all. Those shots were far beyond anything Hollywood has ever turned out—DeMille—Zanuck—Woody Van Dyke—They've never even *attempted* anything like it.

CARMAN: They couldn't very well, those shots were the real thing.

KIRKMAN: But that's absurd, Alex! Those prehistoric animals lived five hundred thousand years ago!

SPENCER: And it's been two thousand years since the Roman Empire.

CARMAN: Nevertheless, those shots were made by Bill Hughes, *at the time!*

SPENCER: N o n s e n s e ! Where's Hughes?

CARMAN: (*Sadly*) I—I don't know. He left three months ago—he was to be gone only overnight—to photograph the ice floes of the Wenz Glacial period. (*Musing*) Oh, I know you all think I'm crazy—I thought so, too. But "Outline of History" is made—it's in the cans. It was previewed tonight to a half million people. That's evidence in itself. The job's done but it can never be repeated. (*Sighs*) Pour me a drink, Sam, and I'll tell you the whole story. Believe it as you will—it's the truth.

SOUND: *Stopper Out of Bottle . . .
Drink Poured*

ORCHESTRA: (*Begins Background for Narration*)

CARMAN: I was sitting right here at this desk—a year ago last June, when Miss Wade came in the room—

ORCHESTRA: (*Out*)

SOUND: *Door Opens*

MISS WADE: (*Approaching*) Here are those papers you wanted to sign, Mr. Carman.

CARMAN: Any answer from Denver?

MISS WADE: No, sir.

CARMAN: I'm taking Katherine to the Trocadero tonight—call me there if the answer comes through.

MISS WADE: Yes, sir.

SOUND: *Scratching of Pen as Carman Signs Papers*

CARMAN: Send this one back to the purchasing department.

MISS WADE: Very well.

SOUND: *Scratching of Pen Stops*

CARMAN: (*Finishes*) Well, there you are! Call my car will you, Helen?

MISS WADE: Yes, sir. (*Then . . . Suddenly Remembering*) Oh, there's a young man waiting in the reception room—he's been there since noon.

CARMAN: (*A Little Annoyed*) What does he want?

MISS WADE: He refuses to tell me. He sent his card. It—it's there on your blotter.

CARMAN: H-m-m-m-m . . . "Time Travel Incorporated" . . . Dr. Charles Hopkins. . . Tell him I'm busy . . .

HOPKINS: (*Off Mike . . . From Doorway*) I'll just take a minute of your time, Mr. Carman.

CARMAN: I'm busy, young man, I can't see you.

HOPKINS: (*Sadly*) If mortal man could only understand how unimportant time really is.

CARMAN: Your time, perhaps, Dr. Hopkins—not mine. (*To Miss Wade*) Have my car meet me at the side door.

MISS WADE: (*Moving Off*) Yes, sir.

HOPKINS: I know you're busy, Mr. Carman, big responsibilities and all that, but "Time Travel" is—

CARMAN: We're not interested in travelogues, Dr. Hopkins.

HOPKINS: Travelogues?—Oh, (*Little Laughs*) I see my card has you a bit confused. I don't deal in travelogues, Mr. Carman, I deal in Time . . .

CARMAN: I don't want any magazines.

HOPKINS: . . . Time travel . . . Taking people back into the past!

CARMAN: . . . or nuts. Sorry, doctor!

SOUND: *Door Opens*

MISS WADE: Your car's outside, Mr. Carman.

CARMAN: Thanks. Show this young man out, Miss Wade.

HOPKINS: (*Disregarding*) You see time is not the solid substance some people believe it to be, Mr. Carman.

CARMAN: (*Sarcastically*) Interesting.

SOUND: *Door Closes*

HOPKINS: (*Going With Him*) Time, as we know it, is purely subjective. It really has no existence. It's nothing more or less than a mental conception, something which man has developed as quite necessary to his orientation.

SOUND: *Two Pair of Footsteps Down Steps (Five or Six)*

CARMAN: (*Noticing Him Again*) Oh, you still here?

HOPKINS: You see, the trouble with most people is that their mind sticks entirely to the mechanical part of time. All they think of are so many seconds, minutes, hours, days or years. Measurements . . . Those things are merely inventions of men.

SOUND: *Footsteps Across Sidewalk . . . Car Door Opens . . . Motor Idling*

HOPKINS: There are a lot of psychological concepts to the true study of the time continuum. (*Pausing at Door*) After you, Mr. Carman.

SOUND: *Door Slams . . . Motor Moves Through Following*

HOPKINS: You see, time has no factual identity—it's merely the—

CARMAN: (*Turning on Him*) Look here, young man, I don't know who you think you are hounding me like this, breaking into my office—walking out to my car and getting in with me, but I don't like it. Now, where can I drop you?

HOPKINS: It really makes very little difference—I can drop myself anywhere I wish—at will. England, France—the Old Roman Empire—Babylonia—

CARMAN: (*Calling Out*) James!

CHAUFFEUR: Yes, sir?

CARMAN: Drive to the nearest hospital I think we have a patient for them.

CHAUFFEUR: Right, sir.

HOPKINS: I read in a magazine somewhere that you studied Archeology at Stanford, Mr. Carman, that's why I came to you rather than going to Columbia, Twentieth Century, or M.G.M. Look at these!

SOUND: *Unrolling Paper*

CARMAN: Arrowheads?

HOPKINS: Yes, from the Pleistocene period.

CARMAN: But—but they're new.

HOPKINS: They should be. They were just made yesterday by a caveman who lives where the English channel is today.

CARMAN: (*Calling His Bluff*) Say! What is all this?

HOPKINS: You see the Neanderthal man had not yet learned the use of metals. Here's a photograph of his cave . . . and much later—one of the Acropolis.

CARMAN: The Acropolis? But *it's* in ruins!

HOPKINS: I know it is, *today*. But I photographed it yesterday as I was returning from the Neanderthal period. It's a beautiful building! The photograph hardly does it justice. It was taken with a cheap box camera.

CARMAN: Are you crazy?

HOPKINS: That's what you told your chauffeur.

CARMAN: But this picture—it's—it's faked!

HOPKINS: Oh, come now. Mr. Carman, you're in the picture business. Look at it closely—does that look like a fake?

CARMAN: Well—it's pretty good. Miniature?

HOPKINS: Does that look like a miniature, Mr. Carman?

CARMAN: (*Hesitantly*) Well, no.

HOPKINS: Here's a picture of the Circus Maximus in Rome. That's quite a crowd, isn't it?

CARMAN: The Circus Maximus? My God! Am I crazy?

HOPKINS: You thought *I* was.

CHAUFFEUR: (*Off Mike*) Did you call, sir?

HOPKINS: Yes, drive *Mr. Carman* to the Hollywood Hospital!

ORCHESTRA: (*Bridge*)

SOUND: *Car Braking . . . Stops . . . Door Opens*

CHAUFFEUR: Hollywood Hospital, Mr. Carman.

CARMAN: Very well. As you were saying, Doctor Hopkins—

HOPKINS: The human brain has a strongly developed time sense—we're born with—

SOUND: *Car Door Slams Shut*

CARMAN: (*To His Driver*) Wait here—(*Changing His Mind*) No—go on home. I'll take a taxi. Call Mrs. Carman at the Trocadero about nine and tell her I was detained.

CHAUFFEUR: Very good, sir.

SOUND: *Car Door Slams Shut . . . Car Drives Away*

HOPKINS: My laboratory is just a few doors from the hospital here.

SOUND: *Walking Starts . . . Two Pair Footsteps on Cement Walk*

HOPKINS: As I was saying—the existence of time is so firmly embedded in the human mind that we can think of it in no other way. I have made a detailed study of not only the physical sciences, chemistry, biology, electricity, but the metaphysics and psychology as well. From these studies I have succeeded in constructing a conveyance which takes me backward into time. I made the first journey yesterday. That's where I obtained those flint arrowheads.

CARMAN: But why did you come to me?

HOPKINS: Because I need money to

carry on my research. When my father died he left me a quarter of a million dollars—that has all been spent.

CARMAN: But—

HOPKINS: You perhaps wonder why I do not go to the other scientists? They would be decidedly more difficult to convince than yourself, and besides—has it ever occurred to you, Mr. Carman, that you could send a cameraman with me back into time and photograph certain events you couldn't possibly duplicate in your studio?

CARMAN: (*Realizing It*) My God! A photographic record of the history of the world!

HOPKINS: Precisely. In here, please.

SOUND: *Footsteps Up Porch Steps . . .*
(*Concrete*)

CARMAN: "Outline of History" as it actually happened!

HOPKINS: I have no doubt that you could buy the title of Mr. Wells' book, although let me warn you the events may not transpire exactly as he has set them down.

CARMAN: At least *he* couldn't squawk at the movie version as other authors do.

SOUND: *Door Opens*

HOPKINS: In here, please. I hope you'll overlook the appearance of my house. I live alone and scientists are notoriously bad housekeepers. The cleaning woman comes every Friday.

CARMAN: (*Stopping*) Just a second! How do I know, Dr. Hopkins, that this is not a trick?

HOPKINS: I intend to give you sufficient proof.

SOUND: *Door Rolls Back (Make It a Heavy One)*

HOPKINS: My laboratory is in here. I'll find the light for you, that step is rather tricky.

SOUND: *Click of Switch*

HOPKINS: There!

CARMAN: Amazing!

HOPKINS: My workshop. You like it?

CARMAN: It seems very complete.

HOPKINS: A man can do a lot with a quarter of a million dollars—Imagine what can be done with two million more.

CARMAN: Two million?

HOPKINS: (*Casually*) Yes, that's what I need to carry on my work. Platinium — radium — rare alloys. They're quite expensive.

CARMAN: But—

HOPKINS: You'll pardon me if I work while I talk? Of course I understand that two million dollars is a lot of money.

CARMAN: You can hardly borrow it at the corner bank.

HOPKINS: (*Laughs*) On my security, no. But, I thought to myself, the motion picture industry is a great industry. They have much money. And they could use what I have to offer. So I came to you.

CARMAN: Look, Dr. Hopkins, let's lay our cards on the table. I'm afraid I went a bit too far in even allowing you to persuade me to accompany you on this visit. Such a thing as you're suggesting is quite impossible. You obviously need a lot of money. But I don't own World Wide Films. It's a corporation. The heads of that corporation in New York, the bankers who control it, aren't just handing me two million dollars to use as I see fit—and if this thing of yours works we wouldn't dare let the news out—not even to our own board of directors. There's too much interlocking money in our companies.

HOPKINS: Perhaps some of your competitors would feel differently. I haven't approached them yet. Look closely at this picture of the Circus Maximus. Imagine what a great picture could be made using those real shots as a background for your actors. Process shots. Monty Hague driving a chariot

against a background of the real thing. And look at the money you'd save in sets.

CARMAN: (*Awe Stricken*) It's unbelievable! (*Changing*) But how do I know these pictures are real? After all, I don't know all there is to know about pictures. Even I could be fooled by some clever new process.

HOPKINS: I thought you'd bring that up, Mr. Carman. (*Decision*) Very well, I'm prepared to bring you physical evidence—from the past! Here, tonight.

CARMAN: I'm afraid I don't understand.

HOPKINS: This translucent glass ball houses my time conveyor. In a few minutes while you're standing here I shall enter it and go back into the past. From there I shall bring you physical evidence of my ability to travel through time.

CARMAN: You're mad!

HOPKINS: (*Kindly*) You really don't think that, Carman. It's just that your mind will not permit you to believe in me. It's been trained *the other way* for centuries. Five years ago I succeeded in releasing my thinking process from intuitive force, then and only then could I conceive time and space in its true light.

CARMAN: This is too much for me, Dr. Hopkins.

HOPKINS: You are not to blame. There's a comfortable chair, Carman. Sit down and you can observe from there—see that I resort to no trickery. I am about to enter the time globe. In a few seconds it will fade into the air and disappear, but do not allow yourself to be alarmed. In less than twenty minutes I shall return with physical evidence of my journey. Mr. Carman, I bid you good afternoon!

SOUND: *Metal Door Clangs Shut*

SOUND: *Thirty Seconds for Experi-*

mental Effects . . . Two Oscillators at Almost a Beat Note Forming Rhythm for Orchestra Blend

ORCHESTRA: (*Starts Blending*)

CARMAN: (*Shouting*) No! No! It's fading!—My God! He's gone!

ORCHESTRA: (*To Quick Climax . . . Cut*)

CARMAN: (*Back in Original Scene Talking to Fellow Producers*) . . . I thought perhaps I'd gone mad, gentlemen. For ten minutes or so I sat there in Doctor Hopkins' laboratory completely stunned. Then I arose and walked up to the platform upon which the glass ball had rested. I stretched out my hands and—as God is my witness, gentlemen, I could *feel* but not *see* the glass ball! (*Surprised Murmurs From Cast*) I went entirely around its surface, feeling it, but not seeing it . . . then limp with excitement I returned to my chair. Several times I had a desire to run from the house screaming for help, but I fought it back! . . . Then as the minute hand on my watch neared the twenty minute mark I became aware of a low humming which gradually increased in volume.

SOUND: *Bring in Oscillator . . . Low to High Frequency Variation*

CARMAN: . . . A curious thing happened. . . . I began to see the *outlines* of the glass ball. Then the sides . . . then the port hole and at last, the door. The ball itself took on a rosy hue . . . then it stopped . . . the noise.

SOUND: *Oscillator Cuts Abruptly*

CARMAN: The steel door opened.

SOUND: *Clang of Metal Door Being Opened*

HOPKINS: Good afternoon! I was afraid you'd become frightened and had run away.

CARMAN: (*Upset*) Hopkins! Tell me I'm mad! Tell me I've been drinking! Tell me I'm crazy! Anything but what I saw!

HOPKINS: What you have just wit-

nessed was the truth, Carman, a journey backward into time. I would have enjoyed having had you as my guest but the size of the machine prevents it. This is one reason I need your financial backing . . . to increase the size and power of my time globe.

CARMAN: The proof—you have it?

HOPKINS: Yes, Carman, I have it. Here.

CARMAN: (*Puzzled*) What is this?

HOPKINS: That tube is the original Galileo telescope. He just finished constructing it this afternoon. He left it on his workbench and I borrowed it. You are acquainted with its history, I believe.

CARMAN: It's unbelievable, Dr. Hopkins.

HOPKINS: It's not at all mysterious when one understands the space-time continuum—

CARMAN: This is too much to believe! You're trying to work some kind of a game.

HOPKINS: (*Suddenly Hard*) All right, Mr. Carman, I'm tired of trying to convince you! I'm tired of being called a fake—a swindler. How's this for proof? If you don't accept this document as such I shall consider our negotiations at an end! Here! Look at this!

CARMAN: (*Awe Stricken*) The—The Magna Carta!

HOPKINS: The English Bill of Rights! Freshly signed! The ink is hardly dry. It was left on a desk only a few minutes ago while the signers withdrew for religious blessing. This paper and Galileo's telescope must be returned before they are missed, otherwise world history may be affected. I shall call upon you at your office tomorrow morning at ten for your answer!

ORCHESTRA: (*In Heavy for Bridge*)

CARMAN: (*Narrating*) I'm sure you gentlemen must realize what went on

inside my brain that night. I called Dr. Thorndyke about three A.M. and he gave me a sleeping powder. When I awoke next morning I was determined to go through with it. I decided that I'd get the two million dollars to swing that deal or go out of business trying. At eight thirty I called the bank in New York. I refused to tell them what I wanted the money for. I offered them all my stock—my home—all that I had as security—as proof of my sincerity. They said they'd think it over. At nine-thirty I called Bill Hughes, my ace cameraman in off the set . . .

SOUND: *Buzz of Intercommunicating Set*

CARMAN: Yes . . . ?

MISS WADE: (*On Filter*) Bill Hughes is here.

CARMAN: Send him in.

SOUND: *Click . . . of Box*

SOUND: *Door Opens*

HUGHES: (*From Doorway*) Hi, Alex!

SOUND: *Door Closes*

HUGHES: You look worried.

CARMAN: (*Solemnly*) Sit down, Bill.

HUGHES: Sure, boss, what's wrong? How's your hay fever? Mind if I smoke?

CARMAN: (*Seriously*) Bill, we've got a matter to talk over, man to man. When we get through you may refuse the assignment. If you do—it's all right with me. But before we start I must have your promise that you'll never repeat one word of our conversation.

HUGHES: Gee, boss, you make it sound important.

CARMAN: It is. Help yourself to a drink.

SOUND: *Bump of Bottle on Table . . . Drink Is Poured Behind Following*

CARMAN: First of all, I want you to know that I'm perfectly well—that I had Dr. Thorndyke examine me last night and he reports that I'm mentally

and physically fit.

HUGHES: (*Laughs*) Which is saying a lot for anyone in the picture business. Here's how!

CARMAN: This is something we can't joke about, Bill. (*Pause*) A man came to me yesterday, a Doctor Hopkins, has a dozen degrees including a Ph.D. He told me he had invented a time-globe, a machine to take him backwards into time.

HUGHES: That's possible.

CARMAN: (*Surprised*) What?

HUGHES: Sure. It's purely a matter of metaphysics.

CARMAN: He showed me photographs of buildings and scenes of prehistoric periods taken last week.

HUGHES: (*Whistles*) That's quite an item.

CARMAN: I assure you the photographs were genuine, not faked.

HUGHES: Did he show you anything else, Alex?

CARMAN: Yes, I accompanied him to his laboratory where he gave me an actual demonstration of the machine by bringing back two famous articles of history—not in their museum state—but new, fresh, authentic.

HUGHES: Boy! What a newspaper yarn that'd make!

CARMAN: A good way to get ourselves into a padded cell if it's ever printed. This doctor needs two million dollars to complete his work. Some of the vital elements are way over his head in price—so he came to me.

HUGHES: Smart. He knows that you could use his invention.

CARMAN: That's right. I talked to New York just a few minutes ago. Told 'em I couldn't tell them what the money would be used for.

HUGHES: (*Sarcastically*) I'll bet they liked that.

CARMAN: They're calling me back at ten—the doctor is due here also. In

the meantime I'll have to talk fast. Here's what I want to do if New York comes through with the money.

HUGHES: Shoot.

CARMAN: I've cabled London. Told Heatherstone to buy the motion picture rights to H. G. Wells' "Outline of History"—

HUGHES: "Outline of History"? . . . Isn't that pretty dry stuff, Alex.

CARMAN: Not the way we'll make it. Now look, Bill, I want you to do all the photography on this thing, all the authentic stuff.

HUGHES: But I thought this doctor—

CARMAN: He's a scientist, not a photographer. That's why I've called you in before he gets here—to see if you'll take the job. You can name your own price.

HUGHES: That's throwing things at a fellow pretty sudden like, Alex.

CARMAN: No more suddenly than it was thrown at me, Bill.

HUGHES: But this globe, this time machine—what effect—

CARMAN: I don't know anything about that part of it. That'll have to wait till Dr. Hopkins gets here. All I know is that we're on the threshold of the greatest development motion pictures have ever made.

SOUND: *Buzz of Intercommunicating Set . . . Click of Switch*

CARMAN: Yes?

MISS WADE: (*On Filter*) That young man who was in here yesterday is back.

CARMAN: Dr. Hopkins?

MISS WADE: (*On Filter*) Yes, sir.

CARMAN: Tell him to wait, please.

SOUND: *Click of Switch*

CARMAN: (*Turns to Hughes Quickly*) He's outside now, Bill—what's your answer?

HUGHES: (*Slowly*) You've been more or less of a Godfather to me, Alex, I don't think you'd ring me into any-

thing phoney. If New York comes through with the money and if this Dr. Hopkins looks all right to me, I'll do it.

CARMAN: Good!

SOUND: *Click of Switch*

CARMAN: Send Dr. Hopkins in.

MISS WADE: (*On Filter*) Yes, sir. (*Turning*) You can go in now.

SOUND: *Click of Switch . . . Door Opens*

HOPKINS: (*From Doorway*) Good morning, Mr. Carman.

SOUND: *Door Closes*

CARMAN: Good morning, doctor.

HOPKINS: I hope I didn't spoil too much of your evening last night.

CARMAN: You didn't — (*Shaking Hands*) How are you, doctor?

HOPKINS: Fine, thank you.

CARMAN: Dr. Hopkins, this is Bill Hughes.

HOPKINS: Glad to know you.

HUGHES: Howdy.

CARMAN: Hughes is our most valuable cameraman—worked for years on our newsreel staff. An ideal man for the work we discussed.

HOPKINS: Excellent. Ah— (*Hesitantly*) I hope you impressed Mr. Hughes with the need for secrecy?

CARMAN: Bill's all right. I practically raised him from a kid. We have nothing to worry about on that score.

HUGHES: Mr. Carman has been telling me an amazing story.

HOPKIN: To the layman I imagine it would be amazing.

HUGHES: Your invention, doctor, is it something along the lines of the Hans Plaudt theory of psychology—

HOPKINS: To an extent only — Plaudt stops short of the actual time development. He is correct in his theory of an exaggerated time-sense only in the fact that the exaggeration was born of human frailty. You are a student of metaphysics, Mr. Hughes?

HUGHES: In a way.

HOPKIN: Then I shall be most pleased to work with you, to show you the mistakes in metaphysical deductions.

SOUND: *Phone Rings*

HUGHES: There's your New York call, Alex.

SOUND: *Phone Pickup*

CARMAN: Hello . . . Yes. Put him on . . . (*Aside*) It's J. P. . . . Hello. Yes, I've been waiting right here . . . what's that? . . . (*Arguing*) I know, J. P., but I *can't* tell you any more than I've told you! You've got to *believe* me! . . . I know it is . . . Sure. . . . Look, J. P., I'd put my own money into this if I had it, but I don't . . . All right, I know it sounds like a crackpot idea . . . I don't blame you . . . but I wish you'd put more faith in my judgment. (*Sorrowfully*) All right . . . sure . . . goodbye.

SOUND: *Slow Hangup*

CARMAN: Well, gentlemen — there you are!

HUGHES: I didn't think you'd get away with it, Alex, they're pretty tight-fisted, that bunch.

HOPKINS: (*Slowly*) Gentlemen, I'm not much on money matters, and what I'm going to propose might not be exactly—well—legal. But it might be a pleasant solution to our problems. Once before I thought of doing it but it requires a certain amount of capital.

CARMAN: What are you getting at, Doctor Hopkins?

HOPKINS: I was noticing in the morning papers that Burgess Aircraft Consolidated gained fifteen points in the past ten days.

CARMAN: Burgess Aircraft is a purely speculative stock—it's liable to do anything. Why?

HOPKINS: Armed with the information of what it did in the past ten days, why couldn't someone, if he so desired *and* if he had the money, why couldn't

he go back in time ten days in my time globe and make a purchase. Then wait for it to rise and sell out this afternoon.

HUGHES: Good Lord! What an idea!

HOPKIN: Of course it would have to be done on several exchanges in small amounts—otherwise it might cause disastrous complications.

CARMAN: But—

HOPKINS: If, as you say, it is a speculative stock, guided largely by gamblers, I see no reason for not using it for the advancement of science—and Wide World Pictures.

CARMAN: What do you think, Bill?

HUGHES: Sounds screwy to me. But at least if it works, we'll have definite proof of Dr. Hopkins' time machine.

CARMAN: By Jove, I'll do it!

SOUND: *Click of Switch*

MISS WADE: Yes, Mr. Carman?

CARMAN: Bring me my checkbook! I want to write a check.

MISS WADE: Yes, sir.

SOUND: *Click of Switch*

HOPKINS: And don't forget, Carman, to date it back ten days!

ORCHESTRA: (*Bridge . . . Down For:*)

CARMAN: (*Narrative*) . . . and so, gentlemen, we made money on the market to finance the construction of a larger, more powerful machine. . . . In the days that followed, Bill Hughes and Doctor Hopkins became good friends and worked together like madmen to complete the building of the second machine. It was as thoroughly equipped as money could make it. Both men realized fully the dangers of the venture and figured on every possible precaution. Especially did they purchase heavy big game guns, knowing that adventures in the past ages would bring them face to face with formidable foes. The night before the first trip into the past the men had dinner at my home.

. . . I dismissed my servants immediately after dinner so that we could talk freely. (*Fading*) The discussion was held in my study before a blazing log fire.

SOUND: *Crackling Flames In*

HUGHES: Wonder where we'll be this time tomorrow night, Doc?

HOPKINS: (*Chuckle*) Dodging Norman arrows in 1066 over Hastings, most likely.

CARMAN: Look here, you two, are you *sure* you're taking everything you'll need for safety?

HUGHES: Can't tell definitely, Alex, but we're pretty well equipped. Had to go as light as possible. Camera equipment itself heavy as all get out.

HOPKINS: You see . . . rather than make the first jaunt a long one as we'd originally planned, Mr. Carman, Bill and I have decided to shoot some scenes from "The Battle of Hastings" and return. If we find we're short of anything we'll have time to get it before the big scenes.

CARMAN: I'm worried just a bit about the film on the "Pompeii" scenes, the heat and ashes may play havoc with it.

HOPKINS: We're planning to photograph the Vesuvius eruption from one of the side ports in the globe. It'll be too dangerous to go outside for it. . . . (*Dreaming*) You know, it's strange, here we are in 1939. . . . We know for sure that Vesuvius is going to explode in 63 A. D. . . . it seems like we should go back and warn the residents of Pompeii to flee before it does.

HUGHES: Fat chance we'd have doing it, Doc. The people'd take one look at us and our funny 1939 clothes and burn us as devils.

CARMAN: Bill's right. All of which brings up the question of how often are you going to permit yourselves to be seen?

HUGHES: As seldom as possible. Of

course there are some shots that we'll have to leave the globe for, and when we do, we'll be visible.

CARMAN: But the globe itself, won't it be visible?

HOPKINS: When we're at rest in time, yes. But in case of attack it's always easy to slip back a few years and disappear.

HUGHES: Or go ahead a few years and watch your enemy die of old age. Come on, Doc, let's turn in . . . We'll need some sleep. I don't know how going backward in time affects your powers of slumber but personally I'd like to get some shut-eye before we start.

ORCHESTRA: (*In With Bridge . . . Background for Following*)

CARMAN: (*Narrative*) The next evening at six o'clock the three of us met in Dr. Hopkins' laboratory. It had been enlarged to house the new time globe and was strewn with pieces of equipment which had been discarded to make room for the camera and film containers. Because of the static effect of the two large gyroscopes, the camera on this first expedition had not been fitted for sound. . . . I noticed that Doctor Hopkins was exceedingly nervous as he made the few last minute adjustments before the departure . . .

ORCHESTRA: (*Fades Out*)

HOPKINS: I'm still not so sure I should take you on this test trip, Bill. There are a lot of things might need adjusting.

HUGHES: (*Cutting In*) Shucks, doc. If it's good enough for you it's good enough for me. (*Light Laugh*) Besides, Alex here has a couple of million bucks sunk in this thing and I know he'll want me to go along to watch over his investment.

CARMAN: (*Consolingly*) There's no hurry about things, Doctor. If you want a few more weeks for tests it'll be quite

all right with me.

HOPKINS: It's as ready as it'll ever be, Mr. Carman. The final test is the trip itself.

CARMAN: You still plan to visit the Egyptian Dynasties on this first hop?

HOPKINS: Yes. I don't want to put too much strain on the converter units for the first trip.

HUGHES: Well, I'm all set if you are, Doc. Film, exposure meter, and camera. That's all I need. I'm traveling light as you told me.

HOPKINS: We're all set then—climb in and take your seat.

CARMAN: (*Hesitantly*) I won't wait for the departure, if you don't mind. I—I don't think I could stand the strain.

HOPKINS: As you wish, Mr. Carman.

CARMAN: All I can say is—good luck—and well—the devil with the pictures if you get into trouble.

HOPKINS: There'll be no danger as long as we're inside the globe—the only dangers will be stepping outside to photograph.

CARMAN: Well—take care of yourselves.

HUGHES: (*Calling Out*) So long, Boss, you just sit tight and I'll bring you a five thousand year old egg for breakfast!

ORCHESTRA: (*Dramatic Bridge . . . Fade For*)

CARMAN: (*Resuming His Narration*) I don't mind telling you, gentlemen, I went direct to the Glover Club and got drunk. I awoke the next morning with a splitting headache. Before I was fully dressed my private phone rang.

ORCHESTRA: (*Out*)

SOUND: *Phone Rings*

CARMAN: (*Slightly Groggy*) Hello.

HUGHES: (*On Filter Mike*) Hello, boss. How are you?

CARMAN: (*Snapping Out of It*)

HUGHES! Where in God's name are you?

HUGHES: Sitting on the banks of the Nile fishing for crocodiles.

CARMAN: This is no time to be funny. What's the matter, didn't it work?

HUGHES: I'll say it worked! And how! The Doc and I are down at your private laboratory—We've just finished developing the first hundred feet! How soon can you get here?

SOUND: *Carman Hangs Up Phone Without Answering*

CARMAN: (*Shouting*) Williams—call my car immediately!

ORCHESTRA: (*Quick Bridge . . . Agitato*)

SOUND: *Door Opens*

CARMAN: (*Rushing In*) Bill,—Doc-tor. Thank Heavens I wasn't dreaming after all! How are you?

HUGHES: Swell, boss! Wait'll you get a load of this. (*Calling*) That film dry enough to project, Doc?

HOPKINS: (*Off . . . Approaching*) Yes—It's all set. (*Coming In*) How are you, Mr. Carman?

CARMAN: Hello, Doc. This venture is going to be the death of me yet. What'd you get?

HUGHES: (*Enthusiastically*) Just wait till you see! All set, Doc?

HOPKINS: All set.

HUGHES: Turn off the lights, boss, and we'll show you something that'll knock your eyes out!

SOUND: (*Click of Light Switch*)

HUGHES: Snap on the projector.

SOUND: (*Click of Switch . . . Motion Picture Projector Runs*)

CARMAN: What in God's name is that?

HOPKINS: That is the desert around Gizeh, Mr. Carman.

CARMAN: Where they built the pyramids?

HOPKINS: Right—and this picture.

This is the River Nile as it was in 5000 B. C.

CARMAN: (*Intensely Interested*) Looks very much like the Mississippi does today.

HOPKINS: Very much.

HUGHES: Get a load of this next shot, boss.

CARMAN: (*Reaction*) Great Scott!

HUGHES: Those are Egyptian slaves, boss. Thousands of them.

CARMAN: What are they doing?

HOPKINS: They're working to divert a section of the river and make it run about thirty miles to the east. Science has long wondered how the Egyptians transported the mighty stones of the pyramids to the construction site. Look at this.

CARMAN: (*Incredulous*) For God's sake! They were floated in place!

HOPKINS: Yes. See those huge rafts. The stones were floated almost a hundred miles down the Nile and then took the new river channel east. It is a beautiful example of early engineering. The close-ups are on the next reel.

SOUND: *Projector Off . . . Light Switch On*

CARMAN: (*Breathlessly*) Gentlemen—I—I must admit that for the first time in my life—I'm speechless.

HUGHES: Wait'll you see these next reels, boss, and you'll break your neck running for a straight-jacket.

ORCHESTRA: (*Bridge to Narration*)

CARMAN: (*Resuming His Story*) The rest of the morning still seems like a dream. For an hour I sat there and saw gangs of swarthy workmen unload the stones that had come down the Nile. There were city scenes too, a hawking merchant spreading his stock of Babylonian garments before the eyes of some pretty, rich lady; a miscellaneous crowd swarming between the pylons to some temple festival at Thebes; an excited, dark-eyed audience looking much like

the Spaniards of today watching a bull fight; a group of children learning their cuneiform signs on clay tablets at a school in Nippur. . . . As the weeks went on, an obsession began to form in my mind, and try as I would I was unable to cast it aside. Before the first six months of filming was completed I knew that I would never be satisfied until I had made one of those journeys into the past. Just before the final scenes were to be shot, I caught Doctor Hopkins alone in his laboratory.

ORCHESTRA: (*Up and Out*)

SOUND: *Door Opens*

CARMAN: Busy, Doc?

HOPKINS: No. Come in.

SOUND: *Door Closes*

CARMAN: I brought the last section of script over myself.

HOPKINS: (*Going Right on Working*) Oh, the Glacial Period scenes? Good—I was wondering when we'd make them.

CARMAN: Hughes and I have been editing and cutting the picture ourselves—We don't dare call anyone else in on it.

HOPKINS: I can well understand. How much more will we shoot?

CARMAN: Just the glacier scenes and we're through.

HOPKINS: Good.

CARMAN: There's something I want to ask you, Doc.

HOPKINS: Yes? What's that?

CARMAN: I want you to take me with you on this last trip.

HOPKINS: As a photographer?

CARMAN: No. As a passenger. Hughes will have to go along for the pictures. I don't know anything about cameras.

HOPKINS: I'm afraid that's not possible, Carman. You see, this will be the longest trip we've made—and space inside the globe is at a premium.

CARMAN: But—

HOPKINS: As it is, I don't dare risk the equipment to the extent of visiting the *first* of the big glaciers. As near as we can make out, that was five hundred thousand years ago. Hughes and I plan to visit the *fifth*—the one from which the earth is now emerging.

CARMAN: When was that?

HOPKINS: Less than fifty thousand years ago.

CARMAN: But surely you can take me on *that* trip.

HOPKINS: It's purely a question of space, Carman. The globe is not nearly large enough.

CARMAN: But — (*Suddenly Seized With an Idea*) I have it! Your *first* time globe. The one you gave me that demonstration in. Is it still intact?

HOPKINS: Why yes, but—

CARMAN: Then there's no reason why with a few instructions I can't accompany you. Now—no more arguments, Hopkins. It's my money that is making this trip possible and *I'm going!*

ORCHESTRA: (*Hits This Statement With Positive Chord*)

CARMAN: (*Back to Narration*) Two weeks later we left for the Glacial period. I was operating the small time globe by following a series of written instructions by Doctor Hopkins. Hopkins had selected the region around Stagshaw, England, for the scenes because of better light conditions. I will not attempt a description of the voyage because there was nothing to describe. Latitude and longitude had been carefully planned. Both globes were in contact by radio. At a signal I threw the first switch. The walls of the globe took on a rosy hue. Carefully I followed the directions and the rosy color grew deeper and deeper. My ears lost their sense of hearing, and my senses reeled. I watched the micrometer hand on the sweep second dial. At the in-

structed point I cut the switch. There was a gentle bump and my hearing returned. The walls of the globe turned suddenly very white and I heard the voice of Doctor Hopkins come over the radio.

HOPKINS: (*On Filter*) We are now at rest in time fifty-five thousand years before the birth of Christ. The world is already dying under the intense cold. The whiteness of your window ports is caused by frost. Take a torch and melt it loose. You should be able to see our globe out your right port.

CARMAN: (*Back to Narrative*) I did as I was instructed and a spectacular sight met my eyes. Not less than a hundred feet away was our other time globe. We were at rest on a frozen and frost whitened earth. In every direction as far as my eyes could see, the world was white. I melted the frost on my left port and was amazed at what I saw. A huge wall of ice, the Wenz Glacier, towering almost three thousand feet high, was steadily advancing toward us. I was seized with a desire to flee but the voice of Doctor Hopkins over the radio reassured me.

HOPKINS: (*On Radio*) There is little danger from the ice unless a piece should break off and fall. And that is highly improbable. The rate of advance is only six inches a minute. We are reasonably safe for the time being. Hughes is going outside to photograph.

CARMAN: As he spoke, I saw the door of the other globe open and Bill Hughes step out. He was completely encased in furs, dressed very much like an Esquimo. He walked about five hundred yards away from the time ship and set up his camera. Then it happened.

ORCHESTRA: (*Take Up Agitato Theme*)

CARMAN: From an ice floe at the bottom of the glacier emerged a mammoth, but such an animal as was never

seen. Fully as large as an elephant and gaunt with hunger it charged straight at Hughes. Hughes had no time to run. Whipping off a fur mitten he drew his revolver and fired six shots into the beast. The leaden pellets only served to infuriate him more, but Doctor Hopkins had prepared the cameraman for all emergencies. Reaching beneath his furs Hughes withdrew a hand grenade. Holding the pin between his teeth he pulled the weapon and threw it straight into the face of the charging mammoth. There was a tremendous explosion and the animal flew into a thousand pieces. The concussion knocked Hughes flat on his back. I had my hand on the door of the time globe to run to his assistance when my ears detected a great rumbling noise. Looking up I saw the huge glacier crack and peel. Simultaneously came the voice of Doctor Hopkins over the radio—

HOPKINS: (*On Radio*) The concussion of the explosion broke loose a portion of the glacier. Throw your control over to positive full—I'll try to save Hughes.

CARMAN: Almost mechanically I did as I was instructed and I felt the machine respond. The walls of the globe began to dim and my senses dulled, but before I lost sight I saw a scene that I will carry with me to my grave. Dr. Hopkins was dragging the inert figure of Bill Hughes toward the time machine as a hundred million tons of ice crushed them!

ORCHESTRA: (*Climax Chord and Out*)

CAST VOICES: (*Startled Exclamations*)

KIRKMAN: Alex—had we not seen the living proof of your story on the screen tonight, I for one would be inclined to call the authorities to take charge of you.

CARMAN: I am grateful for your confidence.

SPENCER: The other time machine,



Whipping out a revolver, he fired six shots into the charging beast. But the leaden pellets served only to infuriate the mammoth still more

where is it?

CARMAN: When I returned to the present I was stunned by my experience. I stumbled out of the machine and into the street, where I hailed a car. That night the news came that Dr. Hopkins' laboratory had been destroyed by fire. I had forgotten to make the disconnections Dr. Hopkins had instructed me to make.

KIRKMAN: Alex, you have done a marvelous thing. You have produced the world's greatest picture.

CARMAN: You're wrong, Sam. Life itself produced "Outline of History"—we only recorded it. And I am happy to tell you that World Wide Films does not intend to profit by this great mas-

terpiece.

SPENCER: How's that?

CARMAN: As soon as the original investment is returned, the picture will be distributed free to schools, colleges, churches and civic bodies to be used as a living monument to two great men,—Dr. Charles Hopkins, who discovered the doorway to history—and Bill Hughes, who made it immortal!

ORCHESTRA: (*Up to Full and Finish*)

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following dispatch was reported by the Reuters (British) News Agency, date of July 1st, 1939, under the heading "Scientific Mystery." We quote in detail: "Archaeologists of the Hamilton-Wayne Foundation, engaged in uncovering rel-



ics of the late Palaeolithic period from excavations at Stagshaw, reported an amazing discovery yesterday to the home office.

"While uncovering stone weapons of the period, the diggers struck a peculiar metal framework, spherical in shape and near it what appeared to be a chrome-steel automatic. John Wayne, president of the foundation, was flying

to Stagshaw late today and could not be reached for a statement. What is most distressing to the members of the expedition is the fact that use of metal had not been discovered by inhabitants of the late Palaeolithic Period, and the presence of twentieth century chrome-steel embedded in fossilized rock of fifty thousand years ago is causing a great amount of speculation."

« COSMIC SWING »

YOU may think you're sitting still right now, reading your long-awaited copy of **AMAZING STORIES**. Actually, you're going through more motions than a jitter-bug!

You know, of course, that once every twenty-four hours we turn a giant somersault, because of the earth's daily rotation on its axis. This motion, in our latitudes, amounts to about 700 miles an hour. And at the same time the earth is sweeping us around the sun at no less than 18 miles per second!

But this is only the beginning.

The whole solar system, relative to the stars, is moving toward Vega, thus adding another twelve miles each second to our corkscrew peregrinations. And the whole galaxy to which the sun belongs, the Milky Way, is spinning like a wheel—a wheel so big that it includes all visible stars in a single disk six hundred thousand trillion miles across!

All parts of it, of course, move at the same angular rate. Which means that the actual speed increases toward the outside—and at the point where we are situated can be clocked at a neat 170 miles a second!

Then . . . The Milky Way is following an erratic course of its own relative to other galaxies. This has just been analyzed at Mt. Wilson Observatory, and we are found to be moving toward a constellation at the corner of the universe—straight into the jaws of the Dragon!

And probably when Caltech's great telescope is completed next year, we shall learn that our whole universe, *a billion light-years in diameter*, is truckin' off somewhere else.—*Lyle D. Gunn*.

IF YOU WANT THE LADIES TO LIKE YOU




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RIDDLES OF SCIENCE

What is Matter?

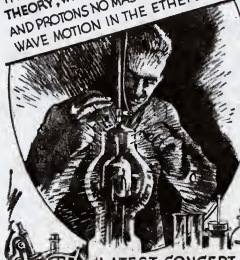


THE ANCIENT GREEKS CONCEIVED THE UNIVERSE TO BE CONSTRUCTED OF FOUR ELEMENTS - EARTH, FIRE, WATER AND AIR . .

BUT de BROGLIE SHATTERED THIS CONCEPT WITH HIS WAVE THEORY, WHICH GAVE THE ELECTRONS AND PROTONS NO MASS, BUT SIMPLY WAVE MOTION IN THE ETHER . . .



MODERN SCIENTISTS, DELVING INTO THE MYSTERY, IMAGINED ELECTRONS and PROTONS OF EXTREME SMALLNESS, REVOLVING ABOUT EACH OTHER JUST AS THE PLANETS DO ABOUT THE SUN . . .



THE LATEST CONCEPT IS A CONCEPT OF MATTER AS ENERGY, CALLED THE QUANTUM THEORY . THIS HAS LED TO A COMPLICATED DESIGNATION OF MANY KINDS OF MATERIAL "BUILDING BLOCKS" SUCH AS POSITRONS, NEGATRONS, NEUTRONS, ELECTROMAGNETIC VIBRATIONS, ETC, - BUT THEIR REAL NATURE IS STILL UNKNOWN .

EVER since man has been able to comprehend the fact that around him were various substances that had something in common, and yet held an elusive quality of individuality that set them apart, he has sought to fathom the mystery of the nature of matter. Present day science has advanced several theories, and the more recent of them, based on Einstein's theories and discoveries, relegate the old concept of matter as a substance into the discard. Matter is now postulated as "energy" in various forms, from electric vibrations, to negative charges, based on new magnetic science.



By ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS

CHAPTER I Death by Night

JOHN ROMMER squinted through the windshield.

"Darn it, Bob," he said. "The whole house is dark. Marshall must not be home."

I tooted the car up the drive. "He was here yesterday. I tried to get him to come down to the city to a party but he wouldn't even listen to me. He's here all right, but I'm warning you in advance that he is a changed man."

"Eh? What changed him?"

"Well, his uncle died. . . ."

"His uncle died nine years ago,

when we were all seniors in college."

"That was his rich uncle," I repeated.

"I didn't know he had another uncle," Rommer retorted. "What about him?"

"Marsh scarcely knew he had another uncle, either. Silas Hunter was his name. He turned up here about three years ago and bought this house. He was an archeologist, or an ethnologist, or something—one of those birds who go around digging up bones that have been buried anywhere from ten to twenty thousand centuries. Then they tell you what the animal looked like,

**What could three men and a helpless
◀ girl do to halt the conquest of the ▶
devil himself, released from bondage?**

if it was an animal, or if the bone came from a man they tell you what he had for breakfast the morning before he died. Old Silas was nuts on the subject. He spent twenty years digging in Yucatan, which is why Marsh didn't know he had another uncle—"

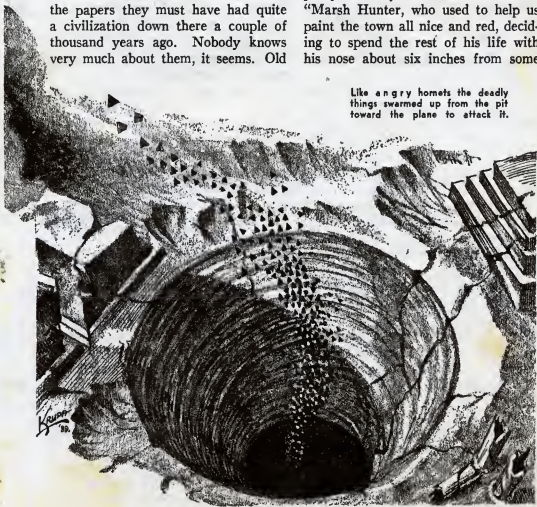
"Yucatan?"

"Yeah. The Mayans built a lot of temples down there and then went away and left them. From what I read in the papers they must have had quite a civilization down there a couple of thousand years ago. Nobody knows very much about them, it seems. Old

Silas was one who did. He brought with him an enormous collection of inscriptions, metals, rocks, and junk like that. He claimed he could decipher the Mayan hieroglyphics, and I'm damned if he didn't get Marsh interested. After he died, Marsh threw over his old gang and announced he would devote his life to continuing the work of his uncle."

I looked at Rommer, expecting sympathy. "Can you tie that?" I went on. "Marsh Hunter, who used to help us paint the town all nice and red, deciding to spend the rest of his life with his nose about six inches from some

Like angry hornets the deadly things swarmed up from the pit toward the plane to attack it.



chunk of rock! No more fizz parties, no more bright lights—"

I didn't get any sympathy from Rommer. Then I saw he wasn't listening. He was looking through the windshield and his face was tense.

We were just pulling up in front of the house. The headlight beams swept along the ornamental white columns, boring a tunnel of glimmering light through the murky darkness.

I saw what Rommer saw. I jammed on the brakes and the car ducked its nose, the wheels digging into the gravel.

Vague and shadowy, it hung in the air just at the top of the rays from the headlamps. It looked like an equilateral triangle about six inches on each side. And it was black, as black as midnight. It hung in the air without visible means of support.

Then it started turning and rising, and as it turned it looked like a dark prism. It slid out of the light, and it went up, rising on invisible wings. As it turned and rose, I heard a throbbing musical tingle, like the chiming of tiny bells.

It was gone, and the bell notes were silent. It was March and the wind whooped it up, roaring gustily around the columns of the old house where Marshall Hunter lived, howling through the bare limbs of the trees on the wide lawn. Riding the wind was a swirling fog mist.

Rommer leaped out of the car, looked up. I joined him. There wasn't anything in the sky that we could see except low flying clouds hedge-hopping across the land.

"What the devil—" I began.

Rommer shook his head. "Probably some shadow thrown on the mist," he explained.

"Nuts!" I snapped at him. "I saw something that wasn't a shadow. And so did you. Why try to deny it?"

He didn't answer me. He raced up the steps to the front door, began pounding on the knocker.

I looked up but there wasn't anything in the sky. Then I went up and joined Rommer, and helped him pound on the door.

A light went on and an irritated voice snarled. "Who is it?" It was Marshall Hunter speaking. I'd know his voice anywhere.

ROMMER must have been relieved to hear that voice too. He swore like the sound had taken a weight off his mind.

"Damn your suspicious nature, Marshall Hunter. Open the door and let in a couple of friends."

Marsh opened the door. He put a pistol in his pocket at the same time. He blinked at us owlishly. His hands went out to both of us.

"John Rommer! Where did you come from? The last time I heard of you, you were in China." Marsh scowled at me. "Bob Grant, why didn't you tell me he was in town? If you wasted as much as ten minutes in getting out here to see me, I'll break your neck."

He led us into his den, where he had been working when we arrived, and he pulled the cork out of a bottle of whiskey. John and Marsh talked their heads off, and for a while it was like old times. The pocket of Marsh's coat sagged from the weight of the gun he was packing. Both of us had seen him slip that gun into his pocket, but he didn't say anything about it, and neither did we. If he wanted to carry a gun and didn't want to explain, it was all right with us.

Marsh tried to hide his feelings, but I could see he was worried. Every time the wind whooped around the house, he cocked his head and listened. He

wasn't listening for the wind, either.

John Rommer knew that Marsh was worried. We had talked for about two hours when John slid down in his chair, lifted his feet on the table, and yawned.

"I'm checked in at a hotel down town," he stated. "But I don't like the place very much. The fact is, I'm tired of hotels. I guess I'll just move in with you, Marsh."

I got the idea promptly. I slid down into my chair and lifted my feet to the table. I wasn't the least bit sleepy, but I managed a very convincing yawn. "I'm tired of my dump, too," I announced. "I'll move in for a few days with you and John."

Marsh blinked at us. I could see he was pleased at the idea of having us but he couldn't quite understand why we should so suddenly announce we were moving in with him.

Then he got the idea. And began to grin.

"All right, you lugs. I understand you now. You won't ask what's wrong. You just tell me you are moving in. Then, no matter what is wrong, I'll have no choice except to let you help me."

The grin faded. A frown replaced it.

"I'm not in any trouble, you understand. But I am worried—"

He didn't get to finish the sentence. The wind whooped up. But overriding the sound of the wind, coming from somewhere within that huge house, was a scream that could only come from the throat of a man with sudden death upon him.

CHAPTER II

The Coastal Stone

IT hadn't occurred to me that Rommer had a gun. He was wearing civilian clothes and the weapon didn't

show. But he had one. His feet came off the table and he came out of his chair like a panther scenting danger. His right hand went inside his coat. And there was the gun, out and ready for action before Marsh even got his hand in his pocket.

"What was that?" Rommer snapped.

"I don't know," Marsh answered, his face paling.

He honestly didn't know. And I could see he was scared to guess.

"It sounded like a man."

"You damned right it sounded like a man," Rommer jerked out. "That was a death scream if ever I heard one."

Marsh poked forward. "It came from the room where the Mayan relics are," he said.

His face got a little paler. He went out of the den.

We were right beside him.

Marsh opened the door of the wing. It was as dark as a dungeon in there.

And the odor was nauseating. It was the foul, sickening, retch-provoking odor of burned flesh.

Marsh's face screwed into a knot. But he didn't hesitate. He poked forward into the darkness. There was a click from the light switch and we found ourselves standing in a large single room, filled with a lot of ancient relics.

Sprawled on the floor near a small glass case was a man.

Little tendrils of smoke were rising from a hole in his back.

Marsh gawked at him, then started to move forward. Rommer's flat command stopped him.

"Let Bob examine him. You watch that end of the room. I'll take care of this end."

"Huh?" Marsh didn't understand. "Why?"

"Because the thing that killed him may be in this room. I can't look in

two directions at once, and while you're bending over I may get blasted in the back. Let Bob examine him. I'll cover your back and you'll cover mine. Between us we'll cover Bob."

It was fast thinking.

The man was wearing sneakers. A flashlight lay just beyond his reach.

I rolled him over on his back. He was burned on the front too. Whether he had been hit in the front or the back, I couldn't tell, but whatever had hit him had gone right on through him!

The color of his skin held my eyes. There was pain on his face, pain beyond the understanding, but the color was what held me. His skin was a rich brown. He had high cheek bones and a hooked nose. He was obviously an Indian. But what was an Indian doing here among Marsh's junk, especially a dead Indian?

"He's dead all right. Looks like a burglar. Also like an Indian."

When I said Indian, Marsh started to say something, but Rommer cut him off with a curt order to search the premises.

We pried among stone slabs with ancient chisel marks on them, grotesque leering stone idols, stone mallets and knives, all the junk that Marsh's uncle had collected, and we found—exactly nothing.

We came back to the body. Marsh muttered something about calling the police.

"Not just yet," Rommer answered. "Instead, I think Marsh has some explaining to do!"

"I—just don't know what it's all about," Marsh answered, looking bewildered.

Rommer grunted. "When you came down to answer the door, you had a gun in your hand. You had some reason for having that gun."

Marsh looked at the gun he was hold-

ing. He bit his lips. We waited.

Marsh made up his mind. He nodded toward the glass case.

"That's part of the Coatal Stone," he said. "Did you ever hear of it?"

ROMMER shook his head. I hadn't heard of it either, but I moved over to the case and looked at it. The stone had been broken and only a rough third of it was there. Sometime in the past it had been polished to the nth degree but most of the polish had worn off. Carved in the surface, moving in regular circles around the rim, were lines of tiny figures. Just looking at the thing gave me a creepy sensation. Some long dead artist had carved those figures there, had cut in enduring stone a message for someone who would come after him. Centuries had passed. The artist had died, and the message he had carved had been almost obliterated.

Looking at it, I could tell it was old. It belonged to a lost civilization, to a vanished people.

"Mayan, eh?" Rommer questioned.

Marsh shook his head. "It was found in Mayan ruins in Yucatan but it didn't belong to them. It's pre-Mayan."

"What?"

"It belonged to some civilization that ante-dated the Mayan era. They may have brought it with them, from some other land, or they may have found it in Yucatan. But definitely it is not Mayan."

"So what?" I interrupted. "What's it got to do with this?" I nudged the body on the floor.

Marsh took a long breath. "I only know this much," he said. "As you can see, the stone has been broken. I don't have all of it. It was broken into three pieces. One of those sections was in the National Museum in Mexico City. The second, discovered later, was in

the Smithsonian at Washington. The last and final fragment my uncle found and brought here.

"Six weeks ago the museum in Mexico City was burglarized and their section of the Coatal Stone was stolen. Nothing else was touched. Two weeks ago the Smithsonian was broken into. Their section of the Coatal Stone was taken. . . ."

His words ran off. Into the silence came the whoop of the March wind howling around the house.

"So that's why you had a gun!" Rommer spoke.

Marsh nodded. "It was crazy, but I was afraid my section would be next."

It sure was crazy. Burglars breaking into the museum at Mexico City, stealing a piece of worthless rock. Burglars breaking into the Smithsonian. After more rock! A dead man on floor in front of the case that contained the last and final section of that same rock! A man who had seemingly been struck by lightning!

Was there an invisible creature in this room, a weird impossible guardian who kept watch over this piece of stone?

Was it the stone itself, or was it the message on the stone that was so important? That ancient artist—what had he tried to tell when he carved those figures into that black surface? What force could reach across the centuries since his death and strike at a thief with a bolt of lightning? Were there forces in the world that science did not understand?

"Why—Why is that stone so important?" I gabbled.

Marsh swallowed. "I have photographs of the other sections. I was working on a translation. The hieroglyphics resemble the ancient Mayan writing. I haven't been able to work out the whole thing. For that matter,

Mayan itself is largely untranslatable. But I get hints, vague suggestions. . . ."

He shivered, a tremor that shook his body from head to foot. His teeth came together with a click and his lips closed over them as if to prevent him from saying what he wanted to say.

He didn't want to talk. He was afraid to talk, afraid to say what he thought.

A dead man on the floor and leering idols all over the room and a fragment of black stone in a glass case. And Marshall Hunter whispering, after Rommer had snarled at him, "As near as I can translate the outer circle, it says: 'The evil thinker sleeps. He must be destroyed before he awakens. . . .'"

His whisper broke, then came again. "The translation is so difficult that I have to guess at most of the meaning. The artist was trying to express what was to him the most horrible thing in existence. He doesn't say why it was horrible. He doesn't mention its powers. But he suggests that some tremendous sacrifice had been made and because of this sacrifice the thinker was doomed to sleep for ages. . . ."

Marsh was deadly serious. I could see that he not only believed in the horror out of the past but was desperately afraid that the attempted thefts of the sections of the Coatal Stone meant it was either coming to life, or had already awakened.

Marsh believed it, all right. But it was hard for me to believe. This was 1939 and monsters weren't in fashion. Probing science had explained too many of them. It was on my mind to say "Poppycock" when I remembered that prism of darkness that the car lights had illumined in front of the house, remembered how it had gone up into the air without visible support, remembered the tinkling sounds it had emitted. Outside the house a dark

prism, inside the house a fragment of black stone, and in front of the case containing that stone—an Indian dead of a lightning flash!

Rommer's harsh hiss jerked my head toward him.

"Who's in this house with you, Marsh?" he whispered.

The words had absolutely no connection with anything that had been said. I gaped at him in amazement.

"Nobody," Marsh answered. "I have a cook and a maid but they live in a cottage at the rear. The yard man comes in daily. No one lives here with me." He shook his head.

"I've been listening," Rommer whispered. "Somebody has been walking through the house, walking very softly. Somebody or something, I can't tell which, is listening outside the door of this room right now!"

CHAPTER III

Ecla

SOMEBODY or something! I felt the hair rise along the back of my neck. What was on the other side of those oak panels—a human being, or something that had come up out of the murky past of the race of man, some alien monstrosity that belonged back in the time when the Coatal Stone was new?

Marsh blinked, and started toward the door.

Rommer stopped him. Rommer should have been a general. When the danger is greatest, he does his best thinking. And he doesn't forget.

"Hold it, Marsh!" he whispered. "Bob and I will handle the door. You stay here and cover our backs. Get yourself against the wall, so nothing can strike you from behind."

"From behind —"

"A man died in this room not many

minutes ago," Rommer answered. "We looked for—but didn't find the thing that killed him. It may be here now. If we turn our backs—"

Marsh didn't object. He backed against the wall, the gun covering the whole room, protecting our backs.

We tip-toed to the door, listened. No sound came from the other side. Rommer's face looked like it had been frozen. He grabbed the knob, jerked the door open, and I saw what was on the other side.

It was a man. It was human! I gasped in relief. Rommer's gun covered him.

The intruder either didn't know about guns, or didn't care. When the door was jerked away from him, he came up out of his crouch, moving so fast his body was a blur. Rommer, when he saw the intruder was human, didn't want to shoot unless he had to. He hesitated a second. The intruder kicked the gun from Rommer's hand and turned to run.

I made as neat a tackle as was ever made on any football field. As he turned to run, my shoulder hit him just below the knees. He folded up like he had been hit by a train.

I thought he was out, which was my mistake. He kicked and clawed and scratched and bit, and the fact that Rommer had retrieved his gun and was ready to use it didn't make any difference.

"All right, brother," I said to myself. "You asked for it."

I waited my chance and let him have a jolting left on the chin. That stunned him. I rolled him over and climbed to my feet. Then I took him by the slack of his pants and hustled him into the main room.

Marsh, gaping like a fish out of water, still had his back to the wall.

I dropped the intruder on the floor.

The jar seemed to bring him back to life. He leaped to his feet, defiantly facing us. His cap had fallen off and I took one look at the black hair and knew I had made a mistake.

He wasn't a man.

He was a girl!

A brown-skinned, black-eyed, black-haired, badly frightened, fighting girl!

Rommer whistled in shocked surprise. He started to slip his pistol back in his pocket. He yanked it out mighty quickly when he had a second to remember that even if this was a girl, she had a lot of explaining to do.

She faced us, her eyes flashing fire, her chin up. She looked from Rommer to Marsh to me, and I thought she was going to fly at my throat. Then she saw the man on the floor. Her attitude instantly changed. She forgot all about us. She had been badly scared. When she saw that dead man, she was terrified.

Her brown skin faded almost to white, her hands went to her face. She whispered something I didn't understand, and dropped to her knees beside the man. She took one look at the gaping hole burned in his chest and her terrified face turned up to us. Sheer, crawling, mad fear was in her eyes.

"Sathanas," she whispered, "awakens. . . ."

Then she fainted.

"I'm going after a drink for her," Rommer said curtly, starting off toward the den. He returned with a half bottle of wine in his hands.

While he and Marsh kept guard, I poured a little of the wine down her throat. Her eyes opened. She muttered something but to me her words were meaningless. Marsh seemed to understand her. He bent over and started to question her. Rommer snapped at me to take Marsh's gun and stand guard.

I'll never forget that scene. Rommer and I standing with our backs to the wall, every sense alert, watching, listening. A dead man lying sprawled on the floor in front of a case containing a black stone. A dazed, terrified girl sitting on the floor, Marsh squatting beside her talking in harsh gutturals I could not understand. Occasionally she used a sentence in broken English.

Marsh talked softly, soothingly, reassuringly. He gained her confidence, asked her what she was doing in this house.

She pointed to the dead body.

"Came with 'im. Wanted *this*." Her hand waved toward the fragment of the Coatal Stone.

I heard Rommer stop breathing. Marsh looked at her and then at us when she mentioned the Coatal Stone.

I watched Marsh. He talked to the girl and listened to what she had to say in reply. He didn't understand her any too well. He frowned and asked more questions, his throat fighting the gutturals. I noticed his hands. He was clenching and unclenching his fists.

Who was this girl? Where had she come from? Why should she seek the Coatal Stone? What weird menace did she fear?

MARSH stood up. The girl stood beside him, shivering.

"Her name is—Ecla," Marsh said. "I don't understand all she says. She knows very little English and the little she does know she has learned in the past month. I can't follow her very well when she uses her own tongue. It's a dead language, vaguely resembling Mayan. Probably it and Mayan both sprang from the same source. . . ."

I thought, "Golly! This girl speaks a dead language!

"She and her companion stole part of the Coatal Stone from the Mexican

Museum and discovered where the other parts were located. They burglarized the Smithsonian, came here for the final fragment."

He hesitated, sought in his mind for the words he wanted. It was as silent as death in that room. Even the moan of the wind was still.

Marsh went on. He whispered the words. "At first, I thought she was Mayan. But she isn't. She is pre-Mayan. She belongs to a race that was civilized thousands of years before the Mayans came to Yucatan. . . ."

I wondered in what hidden corner of the globe her race had managed to exist until the present. Lost in some tropic jungle, hidden away in some tangled mountain chain?

Marsh seemed to sense my question. "Her race died thousands of years ago. They lived in Yucatan. They died before the Mayans came. The Mayans found relics of their lost civilization, deserted ruined cities. They found the Coatal Stone, and while they were never quite certain what the inscriptions meant, they preserved it in superstitious awe. It remained in one of their temples until their civilization was destroyed. In our own times, broken parts of it were found among the Mayan ruins. . . ."

I heard Rommer draw in his breath. "If her race died, how does she happen to be here?"

Marsh shook his head. "She was one of the slaves of—Sathanas."

When he spoke that word, Ecla flinched.

"She was one of those who willingly sacrificed themselves in trying to destroy Sathanas. . . . She can't describe Sathanas to me. I think her race had advanced to respectable scientific achievements and that Sathanas has been a scientist of her people. He had at one time been human. . . ."

"Lord!" Rommer whispered.

Marsh swallowed. "I get this much: He had lost his human form. He existed in an underground city. . . . His unwilling slaves had tried to destroy him but his power was too great. . . . They finally hit upon a method. While he was no longer human, Sathanas required periods of rest and his method of resting must have been similar to the process we know as suspended animation, a sleep artificially induced. He required his personal slaves to sleep with him. . . ."

At that moment I got a glimpse of the sacrifice that had been made.

"He did not trust the slaves who controlled his sleep," Marsh went on. "He made them undergo the same process, his purpose being to prevent trickery. But they tricked him anyhow. They set the controls so he would sleep forever, willingly sacrificing themselves to the same fate. . . ."

This brown-skinned, black-haired, black-eyed fighting girl had been one of those slaves who had given up vital life for unending sleep, sacrificing herself in an effort to free her people from the monster who ruled them. Her race had died, but Sathanas and his slaves had slept on in some guarded underground chamber, slept on while the centuries rolled away.

"Less than two years ago, Ecla and her fellow slaves awakened. The energy that controlled their sleep began to weaken. Sathanas, with a stronger supply of that same energy, slept on. They sought to destroy him, but his destruction was impossible by any means at their disposal. But a message had been left just outside the guarded chamber where they slept, a message that told them a method had been devised for destroying Sathanas. That method had been engraved on a circular piece of black rock—known to

us as the Coatal Stone!"

I didn't doubt his words in the least. The story, incredible as it sounded, hung together too well. The theft of a chunk of rock from the Mexican Museum, from the Smithsonian. The attempted theft of the fragment from the case in front of my eyes—I knew now why those burglaries had been committed. Slaves out of the past were trying desperately to free themselves from some sleeping menace. The whole story clicked, except for one thing—that dead man sprawled on the floor.

Where did he fit in? What had killed him?

Marsh was listening to Ecla. He turned to us.

"Ecla has asked us to assist her to go to Yucatan at once. She says Sathanas has awakened. He has recaptured some of his former slaves and has learned what they are seeking. He has sent out his servants to prevent them from securing the Coatal Stone. . . ."

Marsh paused, then gulped at the words. "She says those servants are not human, that they resemble black triangles and that they make a noise like little bells when they move. She says one of them has been here and struck down her comrade. . . . Have you, either of you—" He looked at us "—seen anything that looks like a black triangle?"

Had we seen it?

"Oh, Lord!" Rommer gasped. "So that's what that damned thing was!"

Over his gasp, coming from somewhere in the room, I realized I was hearing a rising, bell-like tinkling!

CHAPTER IV

The Black Prism

I SAW it. It was rising from a shelf across the room. I had seen it dur-

ing our search but it had looked so much like a chunk of black rock, a prism of polished stone, its ends forming a triangle, that I had thought it was just another of Marsh's relics.

Relic, hell! The thought flashed through my mind—"The damned thing is alive. It has been sitting on that shelf all the time, watching us, listening to us."

An incredible form of life! A servant of a dark master come up out of earth's hideous past.

It rose up from the shelf, and the room was filled with the tinkling of tiny bells. Slowly turning as it rose, it began to swing around, so that the black triangle that was its end faced us.

I didn't need Ecla's scream to tell me what was going to happen. It was lining up a thunderbolt. In less than seconds there would be more than one dead man in that laboratory.

I was paralyzed. My whole body felt like it had been turned into ice. Marsh stood staring, muttering, "What is it?" Ecla was shaking.

The triangle faced us. In that dark surface a tiny opening appeared. It clicked open and remained open, like the lens of a camera that has been set for a time exposure, and behind the opening something began to glow.

The bolt of lightning was coming.

When the shutter in that triangle clicked open and the baleful single eye started gleaming, John Rommer went into action. At first I thought the smashing thunder that split my eardrums had come from the triangle but a second and a third shot followed so quickly on the heels of the first that I knew it could not be thunder.

It was Rommer, using his gun.

All three of the slugs smashed into the triangle. It jerked under each impact, but remained in the air, the bells surging with an angry chiming as the

slugs hit.

The third one rang the bull's eye. It smashed into the opening, dug into the heart of fire leaping to life there. For a fractional part of a second the light was out.

The triangle went crazy. The bells tinkled madly, sharply, the sounds tripping over each other as they came. The black blob of darkness ducked and dipped, went up in the air and darted down, like an airplane out of control. It whizzed in circles, went through fantastic gyrations.

Ecla came to life. She knew what was going to happen next. We didn't.

She kicked the front out of the glass case, seized the fragment of the Coatal Stone. Even in her terror, when every second increased her danger and she knew it, she remembered the job she had to do. She grabbed that chunk of rock and screamed at us to run.

The black prism was whirling in circles, the bells chiming madly.

Ecla went out of the door like a flash of light. Rommer shoved Marsh to get him started, and the three of us followed Ecla. Out of the room, out of the house, across the drive, down across the lawn, running like hell. But not running fast enough.

A flat crack came from behind us. A violent push of wind shoved me headlong. I hit the ground with my shoulder, rolled over and over. In the vivid flash of light that followed, I saw Ecla and Marsh and Rommer tumbling over and over. The roar of the explosion that followed shook heaven and earth.

I rolled into a ball, dug my face into the wet ground, folded my arms over my head. It seemed to me that chunks of stone, bricks, splinters, fell for hours. When the last sullen thud had sounded I rolled over and looked back toward the house.

There wasn't much of it left. The

explosion of that prism had blown out of existence the wing that housed the Mayan relics.

WE were calling to each other by this time. Rommer and Ecla were all right but a splinter of stone had struck Marsh in the shoulder but he said he wasn't badly hurt. We jabbed questions at him.

He told us about that prism. His uncle had found two of them in Yucatan.

Ecla, with Marsh translating, told us more about them. Sathanas *made* them. His slaves hollowed out a thin shell of stone in the shape of a prism, he filled it with things she could not describe but which I guessed were instruments of some kind. After that, they did his bidding. They would fly where he directed them, destroy at his will. And, if Sathanas desired, they would explode.

She didn't know how they flew or how they were controlled. To her their operation was magical. To Rommer it was the application of some new principle in flying.

"Levitation. . . . Anti-gravity, coupled with a weapon of which we have no knowledge. Power to burn. In all probability some form of atomic power, something our scientists are just beginning to think about. . . ."

Awe was in his voice. "A secret like that buried in those jungles for uncounted centuries!"

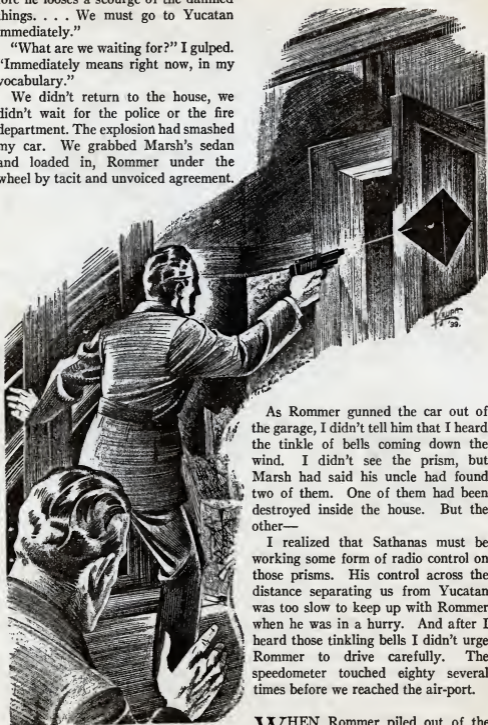
He paused, and I knew what he was going to say. He said it. "Would you and Marsh like to go with me to Yucatan. I want to know, among other things, how those prisms work!"

"Of course," Marsh answered. "Ecla says that Sathanas has awakened and has assumed control of his prisms. They are his eyes and his ears and his weapons. We must smash Sathanas be-

fore he looses a scourge of the damned things. . . . We must go to Yucatan immediately."

"What are we waiting for?" I gulped. "Immediately means right now, in my vocabulary."

We didn't return to the house, we didn't wait for the police or the fire department. The explosion had smashed my car. We grabbed Marsh's sedan and loaded in, Rommer under the wheel by tacit and unvoiced agreement.



John Rommer went into action. Three shots smashed into the prism, straight into that ominous eye with its clicking shutter preparing to launch its lightning

As Rommer gunned the car out of the garage, I didn't tell him that I heard the tinkle of bells coming down the wind. I didn't see the prism, but Marsh had said his uncle had found two of them. One of them had been destroyed inside the house. But the other—

I realized that Sathanas must be working some form of radio control on those prisms. His control across the distance separating us from Yucatan was too slow to keep up with Rommer when he was in a hurry. And after I heard those tinkling bells I didn't urge Rommer to drive carefully. The speedometer touched eighty several times before we reached the air-port.

WHEN Rommer piled out of the car before the deserted hangars and looked up, I realized he had heard those bells too! The wind had died

to a soft breeze. There were clouds in the sky but there was nothing else that we could see. And nothing we could hear. No tiny bells ringing, no black prism dropping down toward us.

Rommer led the way to the hangar where his plane was housed. In less than five minutes he had four half-dressed mechanics jumping like so many monkeys, the doors of the hangar open, gas gurgled into the tanks of the plane, oil, motors were tested. The plane, a big twin-engined monoplane, a combination bomber and fighter, bomb rack empty but with a machine gun in the rear turret and another in the front, just like he had brought her back from a war.

Then we were inside the ship, Rommer at the controls, the motors roaring. The mechanics turned on the field lights, Rommer opened the throttle, we taxied out, he pulled the stick back and we went up. He lifted the ship into the cloud banks of the black March night.

We were off to Yucatan.

CHAPTER V

Attack

ROMMER flew the ship by instruments. Marsh and I tried to talk to Ecla. We wanted to know more about Sathanas. Who was he? What was he? What did he look like? Where was this buried lair in which he lived?

Sathanas. . . . Sathanas. . . ." Marsh kept muttering to himself as he tried to understand what she said. There was a puzzled haunted look on his face as if he was putting two and two together and getting a nice upsetting five for an answer.

"Sathanas," he gulped. "That's an old word for *Satan*, a very old word. But how did that word ever get to Yucatan?"

He sat up very straight in his seat,

his eyes round with awe as a sudden thought struck him. "I wonder. . . . Oh, Lord, I wonder if it is possible for that word to come down to us across ten thousand years from Mu? I wonder if Sathanas was a scientist of Mu? Or did the Murians pick up the word and the legend of Satan from a prehistoric civilization existing in Yucatan? After Mu sunk beneath the Pacific, perhaps other races who had been in touch with the ancient Murians, kept the legend and the word alive, and tremendously changed and garbled, it has come down to us with the migratory races that have streamed across Asia and Europe during the last ten thousand years. I wonder if the legend of Satan reached around the globe, after originating in Yucatan."

Marsh mumbled to himself. Ecla and I stared at him.

I had heard of Mu. The statues on Easter Island, the ruins visible under the waters of the Pacific in certain shallow areas.

Was Marsh right? Was he guessing close to the truth? Were we racing to Yucatan to face a horned and hoofed monstrosity that had heaved to life out of the hideous past? Had Satan broken the chains that bound him?

Ecla tried to describe Sathanas for us. She had seen him. In the long ago she had served him. But she didn't know enough English and Marsh couldn't understand her language well enough to grasp her meaning.

He lived underground. When she and her comrades had put him to sleep there had been a city over his resting place, a city that he had ruled. When they awakened the city was gone . . . gone into dust and broken stones. And where it had been in the past, another city had been erected by another people. And this city was gone, and the Mayans who built it were gone. They

had found a message telling them to look for a stone on which was engraved a method of destroying Sathanas. They had searched for that stone.

They had courage, these ancient people. Ecla had courage. Something of the same splendid disregard for self that animated John Rommer. They would make a splendid pair, I thought, glancing up at him. He was looking back. Not at us. Back into the black night behind us. He caught my eye and motioned me to come up to him.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Lightning behind us," he answered. "Lightning!"

He nodded.

"But we're above the clouds," I protested.

"Right. But nevertheless I saw a flash of lightning behind us. You slip into the back turret and take the covers from the machine gun. Don't shoot at a plane, but if anything else turns up behind us, don't ask any questions."

I didn't have time to ask any questions. I had no more than got the covers off the gun before another flash ripped through the sky.

It came from directly behind the plane and it leaped straight at us, fizzling out less than a hundred yards from the tail.

It wasn't lightning. It was that second prism. Somehow it had picked up our trail and had followed us.

I COULDN'T see a thing. The prism was too small and too far behind. But that didn't make any difference. I sprayed the air behind up with slugs of hot lead, hoping one of them would take effect. The gun grew hot under my hands, the slip stream of air tore past me howling like a thousand devils. I heard somebody screaming, "Take that! And that! And that!" but only when I got hoarse did I realize I

was the person doing the screaming.

Another flash of lightning answered me. Closer this time. A little to the right, but closer to us. The prism was gaining!

Rommer gave the plane right rudder and kicked her into the clouds. The whole world turned over and over and over. A lightning flash reached toward us. Jerked and slammed against the sides of the turret, I tried to hold the gun on the elusive spot from which the flash had come. As we went into the clouds I caught one last glimpse of another finger of flame reaching toward us. Black fog mist closed around us.

I crouched in that turret for hours, watching and waiting. But nothing came. No more flashes appeared behind us. We had lost the prism in the clouds.

Or had we lost it? Was it still hunting for us?

Our first stop was Miami, Florida. We stayed just long enough to get the plane serviced and to wrap ourselves around some fancy steaks.

Rommer bought two boxes of dynamite in Miami. We didn't have, and couldn't obtain, bombs. But dynamite would make a very good substitute!

Six hundred miles of open water before us, sharks below, a black prism somewhere behind, the devil himself somewhere ahead, and dynamite in the cabin with us.

Rommer gave the ship the gun and we lifted off!

CHAPTER VI

Dynamite

ECLA rode beside Rommer, Marsh and I were in the back. I looked at those boxes of dynamite and then at Marsh.

"What about Ecla's people?" I

asked. "If we dynamite Sathanas, we'll bury them alive."

"She says they are no longer underground."

"Good."

"But she also says, now that Sathanas has awakened, some of them may have been forced to return to his underground city."

"Forced to return! How? If I were one of them and I once got out of that hole, nothing would ever get me back."

"Ecla told me, while you were up in the turret this morning, that Sathanas will use those prisms to hunt them down." He frowned, and shook his head.

"So that's it! I don't need any imagination to believe that a man would do what he was told if he was looking one of those things in the eye. But if they are back underground, we can't use dynamite on Sathanas without destroying them too."

He didn't want to answer my question. He changed the subject. I brought him back to it, fool that I am. Finally he told me.

"Ecla said for us to go ahead and destroy Sathanas, if we can. If we destroy any of her people, it doesn't make any difference. She says they will thank us for destroying them if we destroy their master with them!"

So that was the answer! Rather death than slavery. I sank down in my seat and wished I hadn't asked that question.

I didn't say anything more. I crawled back into my hole and wondered what kind of a creature Sathanas was, that men—and women—should hate him so fervently. What did he look like?

If I had known the whole truth, if I had known what he looked like, if I had known what he was—but I didn't know.

HOURS later the green hills of Cape Catoche came swimming up out of the sea. We were over Yucatan. We were past those six hundred miles of open water, and now, at least, the sharks would not get us. I didn't know that in a choice between the sharks and Sathanas, the sharks were to be preferred.

The sun was slanting down toward the west. I thought we would land, but Rommer had other ideas. He drove the ship straight over those green hills. Then we were over the mountain jungle, making in minutes a journey that would have required days on foot, and Ecla, her forehead puckered into a frown, was giving directions to Rommer.

We were over a high plateau when her arm went up, pointing.

The ruins of ancient stonework were vaguely visible. We could dimly discern a circle perhaps in a mile in diameter. The vegetation inside the circle was a darker green than it was outside.

Rommer pushed the nose of the ship down. Off in the southwest section of the city a dark hole yawned among a group of shattered columns.

Ecla's hand trembled when she pointed to it.

Rommer, his brown face cut with heavy lines, turned around in the seat. "That hole in the ground leads downward to Sathanas," he yelled. "Bob, take those two boxes of dynamite and climb in the back gun turret. When we get over that hole, let them go."

The boxes were already lashed together. With Marsh helping me, I lugged them into the turret, slid back the cover.

Rommer pointed the nose of the ship at the hole, kicked the plane into a dive.

It looked so damned easy! That was the impression I got. As easy as shooting fish in a tank. All we had to do

was to fly over the hole, let go the giant powder, and blooie!

It was too easy. It was a trap. As the ship slanted downward I saw the things that were rising from that hole.

Prisms! Black blobs of rising darkness! They were coming out of that hole in a black stream, rising up into the air, heading toward us like black demons flashing up from hell!

Rommer saw them too. He gave the motors the gun and the ship roared downward in a power dive. I grabbed the boxes of dynamite, held them in my arms, set my back against the cowl of the turret, bracing myself by jamming my knees against the edges of the gun mount.

Wild thoughts flashed through my mind. Sathanas was waiting for us. Would we get to him before his prisms got to us, I wondered. When the dynamite hits, will the explosion break his control of those prisms? Or will we have to fight them all over Yucatan?

Our only hope was that the dynamite would smash Sathanas. If it didn't—curtains for us! No soft music and no flowers. Just four bodies rotting in the wreck of a flier lost in the Yucatan jungle. Just little bits of flesh floating downward, if the lightning from those prisms got to our tanks and our gasoline exploded in the air.

But the lightning wasn't flashing at us. Sathanas was not discharging the prisms. He was holding their fire, waiting until they got so close they could not miss. Then the discharge would flash from all of them at the same time. One could kill a man. There were hundreds of them racing up toward us.

Rommer straightened the ship out, pulled her out of her dive. We were over the hole. It was now or never.

Screaming, "Take this, youimps from hell!" I hurled the dynamite over the edge of the turret. Grabbing the

gun mount with both hands, I watched the boxes fall, waiting with open mouth for the explosion.

It came. Lightning leaped from the prisms, smashed into the falling boxes. There was a flash of light. Smoke puffed out, smoke that was vivid with other flashes as the prisms added their violence to the fury of the dynamite.

Before the sound got to me, I knew the dynamite had exploded in the air. It hadn't got to that hole. We hadn't destroyed Sathanas.

We had failed.

Then the heavens opened and all the thunders of the sky roared in one blasting chorus. The concussion wave, the air blast riding that tremendous explosion, struck our plane, hurled it upward and outward, completely out of control.

The fact that my fingers were clamped around the gun mount with a grip of iron was all that saved me from falling out as the plane was hurled away.

I heard the crash of tearing metal, the ripping of stout cables. The plane was turning over and over, its rudder broken, its controls smashed by the combined explosion of the dynamite and several of the prisms. We were whirling downward, out of control. Trees were rising up to meet us. We brushed their tops, nosed abruptly downward into a green tangle. We hit with a splintering crash. A million fingers of fire flashed through my head.

CHAPTER VII

Sathanas

"BOB . . ." a voice said. "Bob, old man. . . ."

I opened my eyes. Rommer was bending over me. Blood was running from his nose and he was holding his head to one side so it wouldn't drip

on me. I didn't feel so good, but I sat up.

Marsh was sitting on the ground beside me. His face was white with pain and he was holding one arm against his body. Ecla was standing up. There was a gash on the side of her head. Her shoulders sagged and she looked utterly hopeless. A crackling sound came and she turned and looked behind her. I looked too.

For a metal plane it made a hot fire. The crackling sound came from the flames.

"Are you hurt?" Rommer asked. I shook my head and to prove I wasn't hurt, I started to get to my feet. Then I saw the things floating in the air around us.

We were almost surrounded by black prisms.

I sat back down. It didn't even occur to me to ask how I had gotten out of the plane. Rommer, of course, had pulled me out. I didn't feel much like thanking him for it, for I had a hunch that he hadn't done me much of a favor in saving my life. When those bells began to ring, I was certain my hunch was right.

The prisms began to move. Their motion was a little jerky and they seemed to need a second or two to get into action, but there was no mistaking what they wanted us to do. They wanted us to move.

Those doubly damned monstrosities herded us through the tangle that had grown over the ruins of the ancient city. Like so many cattle being driven to the slaughter pens, we stumbled along. They took us to that hole in the ground, to the well that led downward to Sathanas.

At first I thought they were trying to make us jump, but then I saw that footholds had been cut in the side of the wall at a comparatively recent date.

As I later learned, Ecla and her people had cut those footholds in escaping from underground. The prisms wanted us to go down.

I was already sick, but when I got to the bottom of that well and saw what was there, I was a lot sicker. The bottom was covered with bones, human bones green with mould. Skulls, leg bones, ribs. . . . The Mayans, having legends of the thing that existed underground at this place, had used this hole as a sacrificial well!

A tunnel as dark as the dungeons of hell led off from the bottom of the well. With black prisms following behind, chiming as they moved and turned, Ecla led us down that tunnel, through a maze of connecting passages.

She came to the end of the tunnel. A vague light came from the prisms and I could see her face by that. Whipped, beaten, almost cringing, she faced the wall that formed the end of the tunnel.

And the wall rose up. A heavy block of stone serving as a door lifted up. A blaze of light came from the room ahead. We stumbled forward, and faced Sathanas.

I don't know what I had been expecting to see. Some monstrosity, part human, part something else. A weird impossible nightmare seated on a throne. A shaggy-haired, horned, hoofed beast. . . .

Whatever I had expected, I didn't see it.

Against the opposite wall was a black block perhaps six feet long and four feet high. It resembled an altar, but it wasn't. It was designed as a support for the thing that rested on it.

A four-foot glass globe, a sphere filled with a wrinkled, twisted, tortuous, grayish mass, rested on the stone block. It was surrounded by a maze of glass tubes through which weird lights were flickering.

I gaped at it. Beside me, I heard the sharp hiss of Rommer's indrawn breath. Marsh seemed to have forgotten his arm. It hung limp at his side. He stared at the globe.

None of us knew what it was, except Ecla. She knew. But she didn't look at it. She shuddered, and kept her eyes on the floor.

There was utter silence. Even the bells of the prisms were silent. They seemed to be waiting.

I could feel a presence in the room, a watchful, alert, inimical presence. There was a tension, like an electric charge, in the air. My skin was crawling and my heart pounding.

A million questions flashed through my mind. What was this thing?

Rommer cleared his throat. As if that was a signal, four beams of light flashed from the apparatus surrounding the globe. One leaped to Ecla, one to Marsh, one to Rommer, and the last to me.

I thought we were being blasted into nothingness. I expected one blast of searing pain, then blackness.

The light beam struck my eyes, held them, but did not blind them. There was no pain. The light probed through my eye-balls, seemed to sweep along the optic nerve, reached inward to the gray matter of my brain.

And an alien thought moved in my brain. Sathanas spoke to me!

How?—I don't know. A light beam can be made to carry a conversation, the electrical impulses of a special telephone being impressed on the light ray. Our scientists have worked it out. This must have been a development of the same process, a light beam carrying a thought impulse, reaching through the window of the eyes, probably being changed from light to something else by the connecting nerves, moving into the brain as thought.

It held me so I could not move. One question after another hissed down that light ray and into my mind. I answered them. Who was I? Why had I come here?

I answered. I couldn't help myself. What kind of a world had I come from? Where was my country? Who ruled it?

All the knowledge I possessed was drained out of me, all the facts I knew, all the history I had ever learned.

Even then I didn't fully realize what was happening. I was facing a globe, but I didn't know what it was.

The probing thoughts felt my question, answered it, told me what that globe was.

It was Sathanas. He was a brain!

THE gray mass in the globe was all brain substance. No body. A brain constantly bathed in a nutrient solution, connected by tiny wires running from it down through the black block on which it rested to the bewildering equipment in the room. No eyes. A form of photoelectric cell supplied vision. No ears. A microphone system for that. No hands. A thousand cunning tools to take their place. Unable to move. The prisms, through radio control and a marvelous television system, giving him action at a distance.

Sathanas was a brain. No wonder Ecla had not been able to describe him.

But she had said he had once been human. As the thought came to my mind, the answer came, an answer that explained not only her statement but the fact that the brain was a hundred times as large as any human brain.

He had been human in that the parts of that huge bulk inside the globe had been taken from human brains. From actual, living human brains taken from living human bodies, grafted together in twice ten thousand tedious experi-

ments, a master job by the master surgeons of long-vanished Mu.

The scientists of Mu had created him! Marsh had guessed right. The legend of Sathanas had come from Mu.

But why—why had the scientists of Mu created this brain?

Sathanas caught my question. And answered it. The scientists of Mu, like the scientists of today, had been baffled in attempting to solve the intricate problems of a rapidly expanding science. The life span of one man was scarcely long enough for him to begin to grasp the fundamentals of one field of research. Specialization had helped, but even specialization had not solved their problem.

In an effort to find a solution, their surgeons had created Sathanas, had built a super-brain, a tremendous thinking machine to solve their problems for them. A brain with the power of a hundred normal brains!

In that stupendous job of creation they had overlooked one thing—the death pangs of the men who had died under their knives. They had used the brains of criminals, the brains of slaves. The scientists themselves did not mind dying for science and they could not understand why a criminal or a slave should object. If pain attended the removal of the living brain, they were sorry; they were not seeking to cause pain, but they were completely callous to it.

How those dying men must have hated the surgeons who killed them!

The result was obvious. Every fragment of brain tissue that went into the brain of Sathanas carried two memories with it: the memory of unbearable pain, and the memory of burning hate. When the parts functioned as a whole—when Sathanas came to life as a thinking machine—his memory was of intense pain and vivid hate.

He hated Mu, the scientists of Mu, the surgeons who had made him what he was. He hated the whole human race.

He waited and learned. Then he revolted.

"Where is Mu?" The question stabbed into my brain with the force of a thunderbolt. "Where is Mu?—Where is Mu?"

Gone beneath the waters of the sea, smashed, obliterated.

That had been the vengeance of Sathanas!

Now, after the long centuries, he had come to life again, and his memory still was of pain and of hate.

Mockingly, the light beam collapsed. And John Rommer went into action. His hand flashed under his coat, came out with the compact automatic. He emptied the gun straight at the glass globe that housed the brain of Sathanas. The explosions followed each other so quickly that I could not distinguish between them.

For an instant, my heart leaped with a mad hope. Hot lead was the medicine for Sathanas. He had never heard of a firearm. Guns had been invented while he slept. Rommer, with his hair-trigger nerves, had got the jump on that unwieldy mass of brain tissue.

I stared at the glass globe, expecting to see it shatter beneath the slugs. It didn't shatter. The slugs didn't seem to touch it. They bounced from an invisible wall surrounding the globe, whined like angry hornets through the chamber.

But they didn't touch Sathanas. He was protected by an invisible shell of force.

The hammer of the gun clicked on an empty cartridge. Rommer, a stupid look on his face, stared from Sathanas to the pistol in his hand. With a curse, he flung the useless weapon straight at

the globe. It, too, bounced from the invisible shell.

A wave of force lashed out from the globe. It caught Rommer, caught all of us, flung us backward against the wall. Overhead the bells of the prisms tinkled madly. The wave of force pressing outward was a suffocating blanket crushing me beneath a dead weight.

Why Sathanas didn't kill us, I don't know, unless it was because he needed slaves. The pressure relaxed slightly, the prisms herded us out of the chamber. Behind us the heavy door slid down. Guarded by the prisms, we stumbled down a vaguely lighted tunnel, into a huge room.

Men sprawled on the floor. We sprawled beside them.

Twice we had tried to destroy Sathanas. And twice we had failed.

CHAPTER VIII

The Secret of the Coatal Stone

THE days that followed were hideous nightmares. We shoveled dust, we moved fallen stones, we cleaned up some of the debris that had accumulated through the centuries. We slaved. Rommer, Ecla, and her people, about twenty of them. And Marsh, doing the best he could with one arm in a sling. We didn't say anything about trying to escape. By common consent, we avoided that subject.

Guarded, always guarded by those cursed prisms! If one of us slowed down, a black prism would come up behind him. The laggard either moved faster or the camera shutter in the triangular end opened, relays clicked with the sound of tiny ringing bells, and the laggard got a jolt in the pants that made him scream. I got one of those jolts. One was enough.

Days passed. Recruits began to ar-

rive, wild-eyed natives the prisms trapped in the jungle and herded underground. I pitied them as they skulked through the tunnels like utterly terrified children.

The prisms brought a native chief down to us. He was a surly brute and wouldn't work. He got a couple of jolts in the tail and he ran amuck. He went screaming off down the tunnel, the prisms following him. We went on working.

A little later the prisms herded us to the chamber of Sathanas. The chief was already there, cowering and sullen.

No time was wasted. One of the prisms backed off, a fractional part of a second elapsed while the relays chimed, a searing flash of fire clove the native chief through and through.

He sagged downward. The stench was awful.

The gray monstrosity enclosed in the glass globe seemed to enjoy the whole thing. It was his way of telling us what would happen if we failed to obey him. We were herded away and put back to work.

Marsh was white clear down to his neck. Rommer's face looked like it had suddenly been turned to granite.

"We've got to get out of here."

While we worked, when the prisms were not near us, Rommer and Marsh carried on snatches of conversation with Ecla and her people.

The gist of their conversation was that we couldn't get out. We had comparative freedom in the maze of underground passages and we could try to hide, but as long as we were in the tunnels the prisms would hunt us down, and if we got as far as the well, we would find them on guard there.

"Then we've got to smash Sathanas!" Rommer whispered.

"How?"

We were up against a proposition

that generations of Ecla's people had tried and hadn't been able to accomplish!

ROMMER didn't mention the Coatal Stone. It had been destroyed in the burning plane. Ecla mentioned it, wistfully. Marsh's haunted eyes went to her.

"Even if we had it, we couldn't translate it."

Ecla turned to him, her voice whispering in tense syllables. Marsh listened to her. He stopped working.

"You can translate it! That's all I need to know. I studied the pictures of the fragments so carefully I can draw the whole stone from memory!"

There *was* a chance to escape. The Coatal Stone! A way to destroy Sathanas had been engraved on it. I was so excited that I forgot where I was until the tinkling of bells reminded me.

I jerked around. One of those damned prisms was right behind me. Had it been listening? Could Sathanas pick up our voices through it?

I didn't know. But I saw the shutter flip open and I got back to work in a hell of a rush. It didn't burn me. But it hung around close to us after that and seemed to be watching and listening.

I could see Ecla and her people pick up spirits after Marsh said he could draw the whole stone from memory, Ecla especially. She looked at Rommer more often. And he looked at her.

With a piece of metal and a flat stone Marsh worked through two periods devoted to sleep. We kept a close watch. There were no prisms on guard outside the door of the chamber where we slept, but they were constantly passing up and down the corridors. Sathanas, after his sleep of centuries, seemed never to rest, for his ghoulish servants were always busy on endless errands.

Having learned from us of the vast new civilization existing in the world, he was obviously planning some form of attack against it. Which added up to another reason why we had to smash Sathanas.

Late the third night Marsh finished his reproduction of the Coatal Stone. Ecla began to study it. Those queer marks didn't mean a thing to me but they meant something to her.

As she grasped the secret, her eyes opened wide with fear.

"Oh!" she whispered. "Oh. . . ."

Her people gathered around her, questioned her in tense whispers. Rommer and I slid close to them, ready to drop on the floor and pretend to be asleep if one of those cursed prisms showed in the door. Even the natives, who could not understand either Ecla or us, caught the tension and knew that something was up.

Rommer punched Marsh. "Ask her what it says."

He questioned Ecla. She didn't want to tell him. Her eyes went to Rommer instead.

Marsh questioned her again, demanded that she tell him. She told him. For a moment there was elation on his face. Then the elation was gone.

"She says . . . after she and the slaves went to sleep with Sathanas so long ago . . . her people discovered a lake, an underground body of water, near the western edge of the caverns. They constructed a lock, arranged a way to open it. They did not turn the lake into the cavern because they wanted the sleeping slaves to have a chance to escape. She says the Coatal Stone tells how to find the lock and how to open it."

"Drowning Sathanas like a rat in a hole!" I shouted. "What are we waiting on? Let's go."

I was on my feet. Every ache and pain was gone from my body.

Here was a chance to destroy this hideous monster who had come to life out of the past! Here was something the prisms couldn't fight. Water! Even if he lowered the stone door in front of his chambers, water would seep in. It would ruin his electrical equipment, short out the radio station by which he controlled the prisms.

Rommer jerked me back to the floor. "Quiet!" he hissed.

"Quiet, hell! Let's turn this lake in right now."

I was at the breaking point. The strain and the tension had got to my nerves. All I could think was that we had a way to destroy that hideous, inhuman brain. I couldn't see the flaw in that method of destruction.

"Sure, that would drown him," Rommer explained. "It would also drown us."

I gulped. I hadn't thought of that. Rommer, Marsh, and Ecla had.

A second later I knew they were wrong. "What about the old people? They must have known a way to turn on the lake without getting drowned?"

They saw my point. Marsh jabbed another question at Ecla. She answered very slowly, and as he listened, deep grooves gouged themselves into his face.

"She says that one man can open the lock. The others can slip through the tunnels and get as near the well as they can."

"What about the man who opens the lock?" Rommer whispered.

Marsh shook his head. "He—will drown. . . ."

In the deep silence that followed I heard the chiming of tiny bells as one of those black prisms went hurrying up the corridor outside.

One man will drown that others may have a chance to live!

Rommer's voice was very low. "I'll open the lock," he said.

There was a moment of heavy silence. Then Ecla was shaking her head vehemently and pointing at herself. She didn't understand what Rommer had said but she knew what he meant. And she wasn't going to let him open the lock. She was volunteering for the job.

I choked. Before I could move, the room was echoing with whispers. Everybody was volunteering!

Rommer was the leader. "We'll draw lots," he said.

We cut a piece of string into different lengths.

"The short piece opens the lock," Rommer said grimly.

We drew in turn. I didn't need to look at mine. Before I had pulled it from Rommer's hand, I knew I had it.

The short piece! Death had pointed her finger at me.

CHAPTER IX

Failure

THEY left me at the lock. Rommer and Ecla had guided me through a maze of tortuous passages, all of them dark. Twice the angry chiming of bells had sounded behind us, but apparently we had not been seen.

Rommer gave me his wrist watch. It had radium figures.

"One hour, Bob," he said. "That will give us time to get everybody as near the well as we can. "All you have to do is press down on this knob. It will release a counterweight that will open the lock. . . ."

He sounded all choked up. The pressure of his fingers almost broke my hand.

I tried to be flippant. It was the only way. "Give my regards to the boys on Broadway. And good luck, you two. . . . Now get the hell out of here!"

They slipped away into the darkness.

For a while I could hear them moving cautiously. Soon I couldn't hear them. I was alone. Alone in the dark, waiting for death. I would have given my soul for a slug of whiskey.

I thought an eternity had passed before I looked at my watch. Five minutes. . . . Eventually fifteen minutes had passed. Then thirty. I stood in the dark, trembling, sweating, my hand on that stone knob, waiting.

And I heard bells. At first I thought I was mistaken, but the sound came again. Bells ringing in the darkness! A prism! Three prisms! I saw them coming, emitting a dim light.

Had Sathanas known what we were plotting? Were those prisms searching for me?

I huddled against the wall, tried not to breathe.

Thirty-five minutes had passed.

The prisms came down the tunnel, poking closer and closer. There was no doubt that they were searching for me.

They saw me.

I couldn't wait for the hour to end. It was now or never. I leaped to my feet, screeched, "Take this home to your master, you dirty imps!" and pressed against the stone knob.

It moved under my hand. Chiming angrily the prisms surged forward. I sank down, expecting a deluge of water. By the light shining from the prisms I saw a dark opening yawn in the wall behind me as the counterpoise shifted the lock away. A deluge should have come out of that opening.

But nothing came except a blast of foul air.

During the long centuries the underground lake had drained away!

WE stood before Sathanas. All of us. Marsh stood on my right side, Rommer on the left, Ecla clinging to him. Ecla's people and the natives were

crowded in around us. Behind us was a semicircle of prisms. We had all been herded before Sathanas. For judgment!

Again we had failed. I didn't need to be told what the penalty would be. I didn't much care. There was only one thing I did care about.

"Rommer," I whispered. "I didn't fall down on the job. I opened the lock but the gate was dry. . . ."

"I know you did, Bob. It's a good thing the lake was dry. They had cornered us all before we were near the well. If the lake hadn't been dry, we would all have been drowned. . . ."

"Now chin up, feller. We'll show this chunk of rotten protoplasm that we can die like men!"

They believed me. They knew I hadn't run out on them!

I faced the front, faced Sathanas, Marsh on my right and Rommer on my left. With them standing on my right and my left, I would face the devil himself!

Sathanas didn't waste any time questioning us. His prisms had caught me in front of the lock. If he didn't kill the others, he would kill me, as an example. I remembered that native chief.

Up over my head a prism moved, its bells ringing as if it was summoning ghouls to the feast. It dropped down in front of me, began jockeying for position. As soon as the black triangular end faced me and the shutter winked open, the searing lightning would reach out.

I kept my chin up. To hell with that prism, to hell with Sathanas. I was ready. I was all washed up and ready to go.

Before the prism was in position, a wild screech rang through the room. One of the natives, horrified by the grisly tableau, broke and tried to run.

The prism swung away from me, swung toward him. The shutter front clicked open, there was a fractional part of a second of waiting. Then the lightning seared.

The room reeked with the nauseous odor of burned flesh.

The prism, bells tinkling, swung back to face me.

A thousand thoughts flashed through my mind. Smash that prism with your fists! Run! Hurl your body at the glass globe that houses Sathanas.

I didn't do anything. There wasn't any point in trying anything. My biggest desire was to get it over with. I was tired and sick and beaten and there wasn't any hope left in me. I wanted to die.

The black triangular end of the prism lined up facing my chest, the shutter clicked open. Even as I saw the shutter open, out of the corner of my eyes, I saw Rommer leap.

I caught my breath.

He leaped forward and up, caught the prism in both hands. His weight pulled the blunt end down toward the floor and as he pulled it down a streak of flashing fire seared into the floor. It had been intended for me, but Rommer had jerked the prism out of position.

He had saved my life. At least for the moment. But he wasn't finished yet. His muscles straining, he twisted the prism in a complete circle. And the lightning searing from it leaped toward Sathanas!

Everything came so fast I could not clearly see what happened. Sathanas was protected by an invisible wall of force that would turn a material object. But his shell of force did not turn the lightning from that prism, and before the relays could shut off the discharge and jerk the prism away from Rommer, the flame smashed through the

protective wall, through the glass globe, and exploded in the heart of the gruesome mass that was Sathanas!

If Rommer had been a second slower or a second faster, he would have failed. But he had his leap timed to the fraction of an instant. The relays, actuating the prism in response to impulses from Sathanas, were already in action when he leaped, the discharge already coming.

The lightning seemed to move with the speed of light. But the relays that controlled it were comparatively slow. The prisms had always been a little slow in responding, a little uncertain in their movements. I had noticed the slowness, but only Rommer had thought of something to do about it, only he had seen the complexity of the mechanical movements involved in the control of the prisms—first, a thought impulse from Sathanas passing through a series of relays into the radio transmitter. From the transmitter the radio signal went to the prisms where other relays had to convert the radio impulse into action. One impulse opened the shutter, another, following fast behind, released the discharge. A third was necessary to stop the discharge and close the shutter.

For an electrical and mechanical arrangement, the miracle was that the prisms were controlled as smoothly as they were. But Rommer, timing his leap to start when the shutter flicked open, knowing the impulse that controlled the discharge was following close behind the impulse that released the shutter, had jerked the prism around and the discharge poured into Sathanas instead of into me.

Smoke boiled from the grayish mass of brain tissue. Molten glass ran from the globe, droplets rolled down toward the floor, other droplets fell into the brain itself. A foul odor puffed out-

ward and mingled with the nauseous smell already in the room.

Sathanas was getting a dose of his own medicine. Rommer's air-trained muscles had moved faster than his mechanisms.

Rommer released the prism.

"Run!" he shouted.

THAT was one order I didn't need.

The brain wasn't dead. It was badly wounded, dying, but its death struggles, translated into action by the prisms, were more dangerous than the mad threshing of a wounded lion. As we fled down the tunnel I heard a chorus of angry bells chiming behind us. Flashes of lightning flared.

But the flashes were not directed at us. The maddened brain, in its dying moments, was discharging the prisms in every direction. Some of the flashes possibly struck the brain itself. Some of them struck other prisms. The explosions that followed could have come from no other source.

Rocks falling around us, the door waving under our feet, the walls shaking and threatening to collapse, we fled to the well.

I don't know how we managed to climb the wall of that well. We did it somehow. Even on solid ground I could feel the thud of exploding prisms far beneath. Every time the ground shook, I cheered hoarsely. Eventually the thuds

died away into silence.

Sathanas, the grim brain that had been created in ancient Mu, the monstrosity that had slept during the long centuries, had been destroyed by the quick wit of John Rommer.

SOME of the prisms must have been above ground. We never saw or found any of them. Probably they lie in the Yucatan jungle now.

We didn't attempt to go down into the well and open up the tunnels. The exploding prisms must have brought down tons of rock. We didn't try to find out. We had seen enough of Yucatan and our sole interest was in getting away from there.

Sure, we got through the jungle, over the mountains, down to the coast. We got back to New York.

Marshall Hunter is a changed man. From that day to this, he has never looked at another hieroglyphic. If anybody mentions Yucatan to him, he shudders. He is again one of the bright lights of Broadway, playing to forget.

Occasionally Mr. and Mrs. John Rommer pry Marsh away from the bright lights and drop in at my apartment. Mrs. Ecla Rommer is a girl among millions.

When they drop in, we spend a nice quiet evening at bridge. Nowadays I never indulge in anything any more exciting than a rubber of contract.

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SEPTEMBER ISSUE



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Everywhere people looked dazed. A whole year was gone from their lives!

YEAR

BY
E AND O
BINDER

In an instant of time
a whole year vanished from the
minds of men, and chaos ruled the world

CHAPTER I

Amnesia?

"AUGUST 10th, 1940."

Larry Benton stared at the newspaper's dateline in utter amazement. 1940! It must be a misprint, since it was only August 10th, 1939.

Rapidly he turned the pages and found them all labeled with the erroneous date. How could they make such a glaring mistake? Being a newspaperman himself, it struck him as incomprehensible, since no man-made institution watched dates as closely as the newspapers, the soul of whose wares was time. A simple slip of 1940 for 1939 on one page would be understandable, but to find it on every page!

And his own newspaper, the *Times-Star*! He felt his face actually burning with shame.

A queer shock went through him as he turned his eyes from the paper. He looked down at the cloud packs over which he was flying, and suddenly realized he was in an airliner. The muffled sound of laboring propellers came to his ears. His glance next took in the cabin and its nine other passengers.

He suppressed a gasp.

To save his soul, he couldn't remember boarding the plane! In fact, he couldn't remember a thing in connection

with his journey!

Why was he in the plane? Where was he going? What did it all mean?

Amnesia!

The word struck him like a blow in the face. That was the only explanation. He was one of those unfortunate amnesia victims you read about—unknowing of his present actions. Yet he knew who he was—or did he?—

Hastily, he drew his wallet from his coat pocket and looked at his presscard. With some relief he saw the name "Lawrence Benton." Furthermore, he remembered everything quite clearly—up to August 10, 1939. From there on, his mind was a blank.

His eye caught the newspaper dateline again.

August 10, 1940! His memory had skipped a whole year! With a hollow feeling, he read some of the headlines. New Chicago Subway Opened. It had been only half done, the last he, Larry Benton, remembered! Second Year of New York World's Fair Doing Land-slide Business. Benton hadn't even known they planned a second year of operation! Gigantic Crime Wave Still Sweeping World. This, to Benton, was a total stunning surprise.

Benton groaned. Obviously, he had known of those events, had lived through that period. But by some queer

twist of amnesia, he had lost all memory of it.

And he didn't even know where he was going, or what assignment he was on for his newspaper. Or, if he was returning from one, what assignment *had* he been on?

Surreptitiously, he glanced at the man in the opposite aisle seat. He tried to screw up enough courage to ask him where the airliner would land, but shrank from the prospect of a chilling suspicious glare. Perhaps it would be better to wait for the arrival at the airport, wherever it would be. Then he could call his paper, by long distance if necessary, and find out a few facts. Thank God he remembered quite clearly that the central offices of the *Times-Star* were in Chicago. The chief editor's name was James Woodley. He should remember that, having worked under him for five years, which preceded the strange missing year in his memory.

Benton felt a little heartened now. Things wouldn't be so bad. He'd get along, using common sense. Perhaps soon his amnesia would clear up. A whimsical thought struck him—for all he knew, he might have gotten a raise in the past year. That would be a pleasant surprise.

Alicia!

Her name suddenly flashed across his mind. Alicia Deane! What about her? He'd met her some three months prior to the blank period in his memory. Good Lord! On the night of August 10th, 1939, he had been with her and they had quarreled bitterly. That was the last he could remember of that, too. Had they made up—or not?

Benton hoped they had. And had seen much of each other in the past year of which he knew nothing. If, on the other hand, she were out of his life since that night—he squirmed at the oppressive thought. Quite frankly, he loved her.

No senses denying that.

This wasn't going to be much fun, this amnesia. Benton saw that quite clearly. After landing—whether it was Washington, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Los Angeles, or Timbuctoo—he'd try to tie up as many threads as he could, for his own peace of mind.

He settled himself back with a philosophical shrug.

He might as well enjoy the trip till the landing. Vaguely, he noticed now that the other passengers were acting strangely. Their heads were twisting, probably as Benton's had a few moments before.

He sat up, wonderingly. The man across the aisle stared at him. The look in his eye was that of a lost being.

Then the door to the pilot's front compartment opened. The co-pilot stepped in, staring at the passengers as though he had never seen them before.

"Can—can anyone tell me where we're going?" he asked stupidly.

IN a flash, Benton realized that not he alone suffered a blank mind. They had all been stricken by the amnesia.

The pilot didn't know where he was piloting the ship. The stewardess, who came forward dumbly, was equally bewildered. And all the passengers remembered nothing of having taken this airliner. They had all gone through the same experience, undoubtedly, that Benton had before. The rude awakening to their surroundings—the hopeless straining to remember—the sick feeling of destination unknown.

An instant air of panic charged the cabin, with the co-pilot's thoughtless question. A woman passenger screamed and fainted. Several of the men bounced to their feet, looking around wildly, as though for escape. One man yelled something about parachutes. A confused babble rose from trembling lips.

Benton leaped to his feet, aware that the situation might lead to serious trouble.

"Quiet!" he yelled out. "There's nothing to get panicky about. Calm down, all of you. The plane is still going, and we're in no physical danger. There are a hundred airports where we can land. Sit back and we'll figure out what's to be done."

The passengers sat back obediently, calmed by his sensible words. Benton shoved the stewardess forward, to take care of the woman who had fainted. Then he turned to the co-pilot.

"You dumb ape!" he hissed in low, angered tones. "You nearly started a riot!"

"But I—I *don't* know where we're going!" insisted the flyer. "Nor does the chief pilot. He sent me out here. We don't even remember starting this run, or flying this kind of ship before. The last I remember is flying mail to New Orleans!"

"What date and year was that?" asked Benton curiously.

"August 10th, 1939."

"Okay," returned the reporter. "Now go back to your compartment and look for your sailing papers. It'll give the destination. All ships carry them."

"Say, that's right," admitted the flyer sheepishly. "We were so mixed up over this, we didn't—" He was already diving back to his fore cabin.

He reappeared a moment later.

"Chicago!" he announced. "We came from Washington. We're scheduled to land at the Cicero Airport in an hour."

"All right, hop to it," Benton nodded. "I don't think you've forgotten how to fly a ship."

"Chicago? Chicago?"

The passengers were looking dumbly at one another. None remembered how or why they had boarded an airliner flying from Washington to Chicago.

But relieved at the thought of reaching solid ground soon, with phones to use, they settled back quietly.

Benton pondered the phenomenon as objectively as he could.

Somehow, a year of memory had escaped all these people and himself, as though it had been ripped out of their minds. Amnesia? No, that medical term for a rather rare mental condition couldn't cover this event. It was something a little more significant, more mysterious. Just what, would remain to be seen.

He had a queer thought. Had *time* slipped a cog, perhaps? . . .

CHAPTER II

One Whole Year—Gone!

THE airliner came down smoothly on the concrete runway of the Cicero Airport, Chicago.

The passengers piled out and hurried for the phone booths within the station, to call up friends or relatives and orientate themselves. Benton paused at a newsstand and glanced at all the newspaper's datelines before satisfied. They were all dated August 10th, 1940. All the magazines, too. No smallest doubt remained that it was actually that day and year.

His instincts of observation always on the alert, Benton noticed immediately that the station's attendants all looked dazed, though they carried on their duties automatically.

The phenomenon had not been localized on the plane! All these people had also been afflicted! Benton was a little stunned. It was becoming a bigger thing every minute.

He had to wait in line to use a public phone. People came out of booths more bewildered than when they had gone in. There was a long delay before Benton,

at last unhooking a phone, was connected with the office of the *Times-Star*. The phone service seemed partly disorganized. But finally Jim Woodley's gruff voice growled in harried tones from the receiver.

"Hello, chief. This is Larry, back in Chicago." Benton went on rapidly. "But what was I in Washington for? What was my assignment?"

"God only knows!" replied the editor wearily. "I don't. I didn't know you'd left. I can't remember a thing."

"Jeepers!" The reporter almost bit his tongue. "Has everybody in the country lost his memory?"

"Country?" echoed Woodley scornfully. "In the *world*! We've had cables from our men all over creation, including Shanghai. It's a *universal mass amnesia*!"

Benton gasped. It took him about a minute to take that in, while the hairs on the back of his neck stood out. Then he spoke into the phone again.

"Well, I'm at your service, chief. What'll I do?"

"Don't ask me!" snapped Woodley. "For all I know, I fired you last year. If I did, I showed some sense. I'm half crazy trying to figure out what to print in tonight's edition. If we use any fresh copy, assuming we get any, nobody will know what it's all about. Nobody remembers a thing since August 10th, 1939 of last year. The world's gone screwy. I think we'll shut down the plant today at least. Come down to the office, Larry, and help us get organized. If I did fire you, you're temporarily rehired."

He hung up.

Turning from the phone, Benton stood for a moment in whirling thought.

The twelve-month *a m n e s i a* had struck everywhere, all over Earth, like a lightning bolt. Like a frightful pandemic. This was the biggest thing of all

time. His imagination shrank before the thought of what it would mean—the whole world plunged into temporary disorganization.

He met the first signs of it as he left the airport.

The driver of the taxi he hailed seemed unable for a moment to place the street of the address he gave. But finally he did, with a dazed gesture. Cruising along, Benton stared out at the world that had lost its memory for a year.

Everywhere, people were dazed. Those who had moved within the past year didn't know where they now lived. Many found themselves in a city different from the one they last been in. Traffic was gnarled. Motorists had forgotten their destinations and slowed down to hesitant crawls.

Benton shook his head.

The first few hours wouldn't be so bad. Things would carry along under their own momentum for a while. But soon the complex web of civilization would clog up. Schedules, machines and all the intricate movement of daily life would be thrown off balance. No one would remember what he had last been doing. If the phenomenon kept up, it would take days, perhaps weeks, for the world to get back toward normal. Benton could foresee that.

But what had *caused* this breathtaking event?

His reportorial instinct demanded a reason for it. But there he was stumped. All he knew was that in some manner a period of time was lost to the world's collective memory. In a way, it was like a short-circuit of memory.

Or the thought struck him forcibly again—*of time!*

He instantly thought of a name—Dr. Paul Balstine. A scientist, he had last year announced a new theory of time. Benton had interviewed him at that

time, since he was good copy, without absorbing much of the new concept. It had had something to do with time being a field of force, whatever that would mean. But he might be the man to explain this mystery.

Already visioning a scoop, Benton made a mental note to see the scientist at the earliest opportunity.

Only two things mattered, to Larry Benton, even on the eve of this sweeping upset of the normal. One was his newspaper. Benton was newspaperman to the core, and already looked upon the event as a story—a great, unprecedented story. His blood began to race a little with the thought of busy days ahead, chronicling this tremendous, stirring drama on the broad stage of life.

The other thing, his only concession to the personal, was—Alicia Deane.

THE taxi came to a halt, with squealing brakes, before the rooming house in which Benton lived, in a bachelor apartment. Telling the driver to wait, the reporter carried his bag to the second floor. He couldn't find his key, but surprisingly, the door was open.

Furthermore, the room was occupied by another man who stared at the intrusion!

Benton mumbled an apology and found out from the housekeeper that he had moved from there a few weeks before! Her records gave a forwarding address that he next visited. But he had no key for the new apartment, and the landlady didn't know him from Adam!

Cursing softly, Benton headed for the offices of the *Times-Star*. He would have to register at a hotel for the day, till he could get himself straightened out. But on the way he suddenly thought again of Alicia Deane, and decided to stop off at her aunt's place, with whom she lived.

She met him at the door, as attractive

as ever, he thought, with her golden hair, oval face, and tall graceful figure.

"Larry!" she exclaimed. He wasn't sure if her tones were glad or just surprised. "Come in. I'm so confused."

"So is everybody," vouched Benton, following her to the parlor. "It's all over the world."

"All over the world!" echoed the girl, her eyes widening. "What does it mean?"

Benton shook his head.

"I don't know. I just came back from Washington, but I haven't the least idea what I was there for. It seems to be a mass amnesia."

"I found myself out shopping, when it happened, two hours ago," Alicia said, her tones mystified. "I couldn't remember when I had gone out, or what I wanted to buy. At first I thought it was just myself, but then I saw other people stop, and look bewildered. A woman ahead of me screamed and fainted. Two cars ran into one another, in the street. It was like a nightmare for a moment." She shuddered. "It still is!"

Benton wanted to get up and comfort her. She looked so frightened and in need of it.

"I hurried home," she continued. "Aunt was half hysterical. She's in her room now, in bed from the shock. And just a few minutes ago I noticed I don't live here anymore! None of my clothes are here. I must have moved in the past year. I'm so confused I can't think straight. The last I can remember is the evening of August 10th, 1939—"

Benton looked at her quickly, and realized she must be thinking of the same thing. In this very room, on that evening, they had quarreled. It stood out freshly in their minds, as the last common memory they had. "It was something silly," murmured Benton, as though to shove the matter aside.

"You were trying to choose my com-

pany for me," the girl said, her eyes flashing. "You objected to the fact that I had dates with other men!"

"Well, I still think—" began Benton angrily, then grinned. "Good Lord, Alicia, no use carrying on the quarrel now. We must have made up, *after* August 10th, 1939!"

"Maybe we didn't!" retorted the girl coldly.

"Well, anyway, let's call it quits now," he pursued.

"I can't forget some of the things you said," she responded, more icily still.

"But Alicia—"

"Oh, get out!" She was suddenly crying, and ran from the room.

BENTON, feeling rather bleak, arose and left. He tried to feel angry with her, but couldn't. He put it down as jumpy nerves on her part, occasioned by the recent upsetting event. When she was calmer sometime, he'd straighten things out with her—he hoped.

A half hour later he registered at a hotel near the *Times-Star* office. The harried clerk didn't know which rooms were vacant till he had looked up the records, item by item. In the dining room, where Benton went after a shower, a waitress wasn't sure if they had any baked beans left and had to inquire in the kitchen.

The common knowledge of three hours before was a complete blank, in all minds. Benton reflected it would be amusing if it weren't so serious.

Jim Woodley, chief editor of the *Times-Star*, greeted him surily. Hair rumpled, fat face sweaty, his usual composure was gone.

"I'm at the verge of a nervous breakdown!" he moaned, rumpling his hair further. "I can't put out an evening edition. Half the press crew left, and the next shift didn't show up. Forgot

they work here, I guess. First time the *Times-Star* has missed an edition in 26 years!"

His face looked genuinely pained. It was hard to see such a tradition broken.

"But we'll get out a morning edition," he promised grimly, "if I have to run the presses myself!"

"Count on me for any help, chief," offered Benton earnestly. "But what was I in Washington for? Any idea yet?"

"Yes. I looked in the files, after you called. You were there to cover the National Anti-Crime Conference. The president was ready to put the army and navy on the job. It seems there's been a big crime wave, beside which the Prohibition Era was Sunday school."

He groaned dismally. "Another big story ruined, since the public doesn't remember a thing about it. I only got it out of the back files, myself. Well, anyway"—he sighed—"it stops the crime wave itself."

"I wonder," remarked Benton.

He turned to snap on the small desk radio. Only two of Chicago's stations were on the air. The rest had shut down. The two operating were serving alternate organ music and flashes. Obviously, they had been forced to shelve their scheduled programs, what with scripts and rehearsals forgotten.

The news flashes gave a panoramic picture of civilization tied in a knot that would take some time to unwind. Humanity had not realized before how much depended on what was carried in the mind. Memory linked each day to the one before—and yesterday was a blank. Confusion reared over the world like a brooding monster.

But, as Benton had half expected, a wave of crime was also reported, particularly robberies on a large scale. The criminal element was quick to take advantage of circumstances, while law and

order lay more or less helpless. Police were barely able to cope with the other problems that had arisen in overwhelming number.

"Guess I was wrong," Woodley grunted. "Benton—"

But the tall reporter was already out of earshot, striding out of the room.

HE went to the floor below, where the back copies of the *Times-Star* were kept on file. Starting with August 10th, 1939, he rapidly scanned the daily front-page headlines. No sense, he told himself, in not knowing what had been going on in the past year. It seemed like the events of another world, or like peering into a future that hadn't really happened.

Some things startled him.

During the fall of 1939, war had nearly broken out again in Europe, but had been averted with another rearrangement of boundaries. A lone flyer had bettered Howard Hughes' round-the-world record by five hours. Fall election results in America were interesting. Benton saw the names of officials who had taken office recently and wondered if they themselves knew it.

But in the main, the undercurrent of life had gone on the same. There were the usual divorces, labor disputes, political wranglings, murders, and such.

And then, suddenly, the story seemed unreal, beginning a few months before. The headlines were filled with an abrupt, devastating crime-wave, in Europe and America. Daring robberies and cold-blooded murders filled the news. It seemed that the underworld had erupted, in a few mad months, into a campaign of unparalleled depredation, as though at a signal.

Though the world remembered nothing of it, now, it must have been a miniature reign of terror. The Anti-Crime Conference, newly created, from which

Benton had been returning that morning, indicated to what extent the nation had been alarmed.

As though at a signal!

That phrase had stuck in his mind. Benton jumped up suddenly and ran to Woodley's office.

"Chief!" he exclaimed. "Maybe the crime-wave links up to this mass-amnesia!"

"What!" The editor was astonished.

"Look," continued the reporter, the words tumbling out. "For two months a gigantic crime-wave sweeps the civilized world. Then, just as government is about to step in and clean up, the year of forgetfulness comes. A year is *stolen* out of men's minds. It's a perfect cover-up, don't you see? The machinery of law stops. Justice is suspended. Detectives, policemen, witnesses, have *forgotten*. There are records, yes, but it'll take weeks or months to follow them up. By then, the criminals will have covered up their trails completely. At one stroke, the greatest crime-wave in history has become a complete success!"

Woodley was staring, open-mouthed.

"What are you hinting at?" he demanded. "That some story-book master mind *caused* this amnesia?" He snorted. "That's more preposterous than the amnesia itself."

"You have to explain the incredible with the incredible," insisted Benton. "If you call it coincidence, you're stretching a point too. I believe human agency did it—a scientific criminal leader one jump ahead of other scientists. It fits too perfectly to be ignored. What do you think, chief?"

"I think you're crazy," returned Woodley flatly. He waved a hand in dismissal. "Roll up your sleeves and get to work here. I'm short-handed."

"I'm going out, chief," said Benton firmly, suddenly making up his mind,

"to see if I can get any leads on my idea."

Woodley glared, in no mood to be crossed.

"If you do, you're fired!" he snapped.

"All right, I'm fired."

Benton stalked out.

CHAPTER III

Dr. Balstine

OUTSIDE, Larry Benton thought himself a fool.

His idea was fantastic. Still, what was more fantastic than the mass amnesia? Yet that had happened. He set his lips. He'd follow his idea through. First of all, Dr. Balstine.

Finding no press-car available down below, Benton hailed a taxi. An hour later, after winning through numerous traffic snarls, he got out at the scientist's suburban home, a plain little house set back among tall trees. There was a brick building in back that might be his laboratory, surrounded by a high board fence.

The scientist himself answered the door, a short plump person with amazingly bright little eyes. When Benton announced himself, Dr. Balstine shook his head.

"No interview," he snapped nervously. "I couldn't help you if I wanted to. I've lost my memory." His voice shook a little. "Amnesia, I suppose. I'm waiting for it to go."

"That's what I came to talk to you about," said Benton quickly. "Have you any theory to explain why everyone has the same symptom?"

The little man stared.

"Everyone!" he reiterated.

Benton nodded.

"Seems to be a world-wide condition.

Four hours ago everyone lost the ability

to remember anything beyond August 10th, 1939." He glanced at the scientist curiously. "Didn't you know?"

"No!" exploded Dr. Balstine. Relief had stolen into his face. "I thought it was just myself. I've been alone all that time, worrying myself sick. Come in and tell me about it."

Excitement replaced the nervousness he had first betrayed.

Seated in the parlor, Benton explained what he knew. The scientist listened attentively, his eyes deeply thoughtful.

"It's all a crazy mystery," concluded the reporter. "It's hard to understand how a year of memory can be wiped out in every mind on earth."

"Biologically, it's impossible," stated the scientist. He paced the floor, frowning heavily. "The answer must be from an objective viewpoint. That is, that something *outside* of our minds produced the effect. Obviously, we lived through that period from August 10th, 1939, to August 10th, 1940. Life went on as it always had. We ate, slept, worked. I was looking over my notes before, trying to jog my memory, and saw that all had gone as it should, up till today."

His tones became eager. "In fact, I noticed that just a year ago, on July 11th, I obtained experimental proof of my time-field. I was going to announce it the following week!"

"Couldn't that have some tie-up?" asked Benton slowly. "I mean the time angle. After all, it's a period of *time* that was so strangely eliminated from our memories."

The scientist stopped stock still. His bright little eyes seemed to pierce through and through the reporter.

"Maybe you're right!" he whispered. "How much do you know about my time theory?"

"Very little," admitted Benton apol-

ogetically. He drew out a notebook and a stub of pencil, expectantly.

"Then listen." The scientist thought a moment before resuming. "The classical conception of Time is that it is a sort of fourth dimension along which all events slide. My theory of Time is that it is a *field* of force, like the gravity field around Earth, or a magnetic field around a magnet. That reduces it to a measurable force, and I've measured it.

"Like gravity, it is constant, unvarying. It is tremendously powerful. For instance, if you wanted to make the proverbial trip into the past or future, escaping the field"—he smiled—"you would need the energy given by the atomic disintegration of tons of matter. Just as, to escape gravity, you would have to burn tons of rocket fuel."

Benton nodded slowly, seeing the point.

"We can skip that. But can you dovetail your theory in any way with this mass amnesia?" he queried.

THE scientist paced up and down silently for a while.

"I think I can," he spoke presently. "Going into the past and future are fantastic speculation, but there's another angle to the phenomenon of Time. Have you ever heard of 'physiological Time'?"

Benton shook his head.

"In brief, it's an independent time-sense that humans, and possibly all living creatures have. That is, despite clocks, we often feel Time slowed or speeded. To a soon-to-be father, pacing in a hospital, Time seems to drag endlessly. Or to anyone waiting for something to happen. On the other hand, Time often seems to fly, especially when we're enjoying ourselves. An hour to the former seems like years, because his mind is stimulated, abnormally active.

An hour to the latter seems like a minute, because he is calm and untroubled. And this is due, I believe, to the existence of secondary Time-fields in our brains. When these conflict with the stable Time-field of the universe, we're out of tune, temporarily."

Benton was frowning thoughtfully.

"I don't see—" he began, but the scientist interrupted.

"I'm just trying to show how easy it is for our physiological Time-sense and the standard Time-field of the universe to be out of phase. The Time-field can't be changed, as I stated. But something could easily affect *our own* mind-clocks, throwing them so far off normal that we are out of tune with the Time-field by a full year!"

"But *what?*" demanded Benton. "It's never happened before."

Dr. Balstine made a gesture signifying he had no answer.

"There is a first time for everything," he said tritely. "I've explained as much as I can." His bright eyes became reflective. "I'm going to try to find out just what did it. Something has twisted our Time-sense, short-circuited it, from today back to August 10th of last year. And with it, all memory. It's the most amazing phenomenon of nature in the annals of science!"

Benton wet his lips and decided it was time to bring out his secret thought.

"Of nature?" he repeated. "Could it in any way have been brought about by a *human* agency?"

The scientist laughed and gasped at the same time.

"You might as well look for a human agency behind an earthquake, young man," he scoffed. "I think I know more about Time than any man living today, yet I wouldn't have the least idea how to produce this phenomenon. No, that's too incredible to even think about."

Dr. Balstine's tones were so final that

Benton closed his notebook and made his departure, discouraged.

He could write up the physiological Time-sense theory as a scoop for the *Times-Star*, however. That is, he wondered dryly, if anybody cared. The reading public might be too preoccupied with its dilemma to care about pretty scientific speeches. Then he suddenly remembered that he had been fired, anyway, so what did it matter?

BENTON had trouble getting back to his hotel.

No taxis were in sight. He took a street-car crowded with dazed, unhappy creatures, only to have it eventually stop behind a long line of stalled cars. The city's transportation system, depending on timed schedules that motormen had forgotten, was rapidly becoming paralyzed. It could be no different in all the other large cities of earth.

He began walking.

He noticed that most shops had closed. People were in no mood to shop. The problem faced them all of reorganizing lives that had suddenly stopped, and begun again, twelve months later—on the verge of the unknown.

A couple passed, and by the strange way they looked at the baby the man carried, Benton surmised the addition to their family was a complete surprise to them.

It was a mad world, one in which shock piled on shock, to each individual. With an unconscious sense of humor, a street beggar was whining. "I can't remember when I've eaten last, mister—"

Benton gave him a quarter.

He luckily snared a taxi for part of the way, paying an exorbitant price to the avaricious driver, and arrived at the *Times-Star* office thankfully.

He strode into Woodley's office and displayed his notebook.

"Scoop for the *Times-Star*," he announced blandly. "All about our physiological Time-sense, by Dr. Paul Balstine."

The editor looked up quizzically.

"I thought I fired you!"

"Well?"

"All right, get to work, you long-legged baboon," growled Woodley. "Did you give up on your master-mind theory?"

"Not exactly," shrugged Benton. "I'm going to keep my eyes peeled for further leads."

He rolled up his sleeves and began working.

A sense of duty had prompted him to swallow his pride and come back. He couldn't let the *Times-Star* down now, when it needed him. He worked till four in the morning, along with most of the loyal staff, trying to put out a coherent edition. It would hit the stands at nine in the morning. Woodley had applied sheer genius in filling out the space not occupied by the usual advertisements and spot-news of citywide conditions. He had had his rewrite men go through the files and give a resume of the past year's happenings.

Helping in this, Benton felt as though he were reviewing some period in the far past, like in Roman times. Or as though some highly imaginative author had written a parody of his times. Especially the crime-wave.

The more he thought of it, the more he was convinced that it was too much of a coincidence to be followed by the year of amnesia.

At four A.M., dog weary, Benton dragged himself to his hotel room. He couldn't remember when he had slept last, but it felt like a week. He had probably slaved on the Washington assignment. His last waking thought was of Alicia Deane, and whether she would continue to hold a grudge because of

that quarrel of a year ago. Sometimes women were funny creatures.

He was awakened at nine by a phone call.

Woodley, back at his desk, wanted him over, with a busy day ahead for all. Growling that he'd be right over, Benton shaved and dressed. He felt peculiar, rather light-headed. Had yesterday been a bad dream? His thoughts flew back, but stopped abruptly with the "awakening" aboard the liner. Beyond that, his memory was still an aching, uncanny blank.

Momentarily rebellious, he strove to bring back some of that missing year of remembrance. He thought till he perspired. He tried to vision himself boarding the airliner, at Washington, but couldn't. What had he done the day before? Interviewed a Congressman, perhaps, or taken notes at the Conference, or played poker with some of the boys?

But nothing struck a responsive chord within his straining mind. And all the days before that, 365 of them, were equally empty, non-existent.

All over the world, people must be getting up and trying to remember, hoping the phenomenon had gone. Millions of people must be finding their lives and affairs so tangled that it would take them weeks to get straightened out. Two billion people without an iota of consciousness of the past year! What a shambles the world would be for a while!

At a restaurant, Benton ordered ham and eggs, but was told he couldn't have eggs. Somebody had forgotten to deliver them that morning. At the office a red-eyed Woodley set him to work re-writing what reports the news-agencies had been able to glean.

In general, the world's affairs had ground to a virtual halt. Business was stagnant, factories closed. Wall Street

was in a panic. The suicide rate had increased. Ships at sea were heading for the nearest ports. In diplomatic circles, pandemonium reigned, with countries unaware of their present relationships.

Benton grinned as he read of the usual troop movements in Europe becoming so tangled that they were all withdrawn.

It wasn't holocaust, in the sense that world-wide earthquakes or war would have been. It was simply a quiet breaking down of civilization's daily intricacies. But the effects were far-reaching and troublous.

Already the bigger cities were faced with the looming problem of food shortage, with train and truck schedules badly disturbed. Emergency measures would probably be required.

Benton was most concerned, however, with the continuing crime-wave. Systematic looting was going on in all big cities. The criminal element was filling its pockets, while law enforcement agencies lay befuddled. Some of the biggest banks and vaults were victims, in daring daylight raids. Civilization would find itself considerably poorer, when order had been again instituted. And there would be little hope of tracking down the criminals, in the confusion.

There must be a master-mind behind this, Benton told himself for the hundredth time, no matter how melodramatic it sounded.

CHAPTER IV

The Hat with a Metal Band

BENTON started as someone touched his elbow. It was Woodley, looking rather thoughtful.

"I just noticed," he said, "in looking over your Washington report, that

you'd had a hot tip that the big-shot behind the crime wave was in Chicago! It seems the whole thing was organized by some one—"

"Who?" yelled Benton, instantly alert.

Woodley shook his head. "You didn't get that. Just an underworld grapevine rumor that headquarters for the crime-wave were in Chicago—"

"Didn't I tell you?" interrupted Benton. "There *is* a master-mind behind this, who organized the crime-wave *and* the mass amnesia!"

"Don't try to tie up the two things," barked Woodley skeptically. "All I see in this—"

"Is your nose!"

They glared at each other. But Benton's glare suddenly changed to a stare, as he looked past the editor's head, through the open windows of the office.

"Look!" he cried. "The bank across the street is being raided!"

They ran to the window and stared down at the street scene.

A big powerful car stood at the curb, motor running. Two masked men armed with guns were on the sidewalk, on guard. The few pedestrians in that block were scurrying away like rabbits. A traffic policeman a block away was running up, tugging at his gun.

Benton took the scene in at a glance, and then dashed away, flying down the steps three at a time. He had no foolish notions of being a hero and stopping their bold robbery. He had no gun in the first place. But he did have a vague plan of following them, in a press car, and seeing where the trail led—for a possible scoop.

He arrived in the building's foyer just in time to see the final act.

Three masked men ran out of the bank, lugging sacks that bulged. The policeman running up began firing. It was foolish bravery. A return salvo

from the bandits stopped him in his tracks, and he fell. But his last shot stretched one of the bandits on the sidewalk. His companions dragged him into the car and they roared away.

Another successful coup! Benton cursed to realize it had happened too quickly for him to follow.

He ran toward the bank, then, to see what the situation was inside. As he passed the hat lying on the sidewalk, that had fallen from the wounded bandit's head, he kicked at it with feeling.

He stopped in surprise.

He had hurt his toe in the act, and the hat had barely slid along a few feet, without losing shape. Benton picked it up and found it strangely heavy. Mystified, he pressed his fingers along the headband and felt a strip of metal.

A crowd began pressing up now, jabbering excitedly. Benton stepped away, with the hat. He wanted to try something. In the lobby of his own building, he put the hat on, taking off his own battered fedora.

As the bandit's hat slipped over his skull, he felt a queer shock. There was a moment of dizziness. Then, instantly, memory flooded back—all of it! The blank period in his mind vanished. He remembered everything from August 10th, 1939, to this day of August 11, 1940!

The hat, with its peculiar metal lining, somehow neutralized the amnesia!

HE took the hat off again, experimentally. There was a slight dizziness, a faint hum that seemed to leap into his brain, and again twelve months of his past life were a blank! He could remember nothing of it. Staring at the hat, he could only remember that he *had* remembered the blank period!

Benton leaped up the stairs, faster than he had come down.

Without a word, he jammed the hat

down on Woodley's head, and watched him. Woodley's face showed annoyance, surprise, and finally his lower jaw sagged as though it had unhinged.

"Why—why I can remember everything now!" he stammered. "Benton, you've got something here!"

"I'll say I have," the reporter agreed.

He leaned his tall body forward tensely. "This practically proves my contention, that the brain behind the crime-wave is the brain behind the amnesia! Somehow, he caused the amnesia. He distributed these hat-shields to his organization, so they would be in full command of themselves, while the rest of the world was in a fog. And this master-mind is somewhere in this city!"

"We've got to find him!" Woodley exclaimed. "Great scoop for the *Times-Star*. The world in the clutches of a fiend, a cold-blooded ringleader of crime, a Machiavelli—"

"You can call him names later, in the paper," interrupted Benton. "The thing is to find him. It still isn't easy. First, I'm going to show this hat to Dr. Balstine. Maybe he has some idea—"

The phone rang and Woodley handed the instrument to the reporter. "For you, Benton."

Alicia's voice greeted him, sending an answering throb through his veins.

"Larry? I want to see you. Can you come right over?"

"Sorry, Alicia," he returned, his mind filled with the revelation of the hat. "No time now. I'll see you when I can."

It gave him a thrill that she had called. Her voice had sounded forgiving and sweet. She was probably sorry for holding him off before, and wanted to make up. He'd turn her down for the time being, that was the way to handle her.

"But Larry, I—"

"No buts," he broke in, feeling he had this situation, at least, well in hand. "I'll

explain later."

He hung up, snatched the hat off Woodley's head and strode away. At the door he turned.

"Make a note, chief," he grinned. "You gave me a raise three months ago. Tomorrow's payday."

DRIVING a fast press car, Benton set a reckless pace for Dr. Balstine's home. He wore the shielding hat and reviewed the past year of his life, in his thoughts. Funny how much seemed crowded into it, when revealed all of a sudden like this. One thing stood out, however. Alicia Deane. The trivial quarrel had meant nothing, of course. They had seen more of each other after that. He grinned. She had even—

Benton snapped himself alert, nearly running into another car at the rate of sixty miles an hour. No time to think of those things now.

Arriving at the house, he slammed on the brakes, ran up the steps, and rang the bell impatiently.

The little scientist opened the door.

"Oh, Benton. Come in. I've been thinking over what you said about a human agency behind this—"

Without a word of explanation, the reporter slipped the weighted hat over Dr. Balstine's bald skull. He went through the same reactions Woodley had displayed, but recovered more quickly.

"A shield!" he cried excitedly, his blue eyes snapping. He examined it while Benton told of how he had found it.

"This is in effect," the scientist continued, "a condenser composed of two strips of aluminum and copper, with a thin layer of glass wool between. Any outside field of broadcast force, striking it, is shunted away, by being condensed between the strips. Thus the brain

wearing the hat is protected from whatever wave is producing the amnesia."

"But the question is—who's producing the wave?" cried Benton. "Can you track it down in any way, Dr. Balstine? I have good reason to believe the man behind all this is in Chicago!"

The scientist started a little.

He put the hat back on and sat for a moment quietly. His eyes narrowed, as he evidently reviewed something in his returned memory. By degrees his face became whiter and more dumbfounded. At the last, when a minute had gone by, his features were wildly perturbed.

"Dr. von Steeden!" he gasped. "We worked it out together, a year ago, from my theory—a type of wave that would depress the potential of physiological time in the mind. Good God! I'm responsible for this world-wide amnesia! *It's on my soul!*"

Benton shook the half hysterical man by the shoulders.

"Snap out of it and talk sense!" he demanded.

The little scientist took hold of himself.

"I published an article on my time-theory a year ago, but withheld the final formulae, realizing the danger—" He stopped and began again, frowning thoughtfully. "No. Now I remember! I wanted to build a wave-projector. A great plan had struck me. I could prevent the coming world war that festered in Europe! By wiping out memory, the warlords would be confused. Each time a so-called crisis arose, I would use the wave-projector, scattering the danger. Such was the great, blinding mission that I set my soul upon, with my discovery!"

Benton gasped. The little scientist had indeed conceived a stupendous thing, altruistic to the core. But, as with all such idealistic men, he had not foreseen the impracticable side of it. He

had staved off the latest European crisis, all right, but what more? How did the crime-wave tie in?

"This von Steeden," Benton asked. "What of him?"

Dr. Balstine's pinched face was a sickly grey.

"I'm trying to think it out," he cried nervously. "Von Steeden read my article, and looked me up. We developed the wave-projector together. We finished it a month ago. It's out there in my back yard, screened by trees!" He moaned. "I'd forgotten—forgotten it all!"

"Then let's turn it off!"

Benton jumped up, with this idea in mind.

CHAPTER V

The Amnesia Machine

"WAIT! Be seated, gentlemen!"

It was a new voice, from the doorway behind them.

A tall, grim-faced, hook-nosed man stood there, smiling mirthlessly. Larry Benton recognized him instantly as "Doctor" Mike Larnin, international underworld master-mind—clever, cunning, ruthless.

"Dr. von Steeden!" gasped the scientist. "We must turn off our wave-projector! We've made a mistake—"

"Sit down!" repeated the newcomer.

Benton sat down and pulled the scientist down with him. Two men had appeared silently, one in the doorway opposite, the other at the window of the sun-porch. They were armed thugs.

"Now let me explain," continued Mike Larnin. He added softly, "You'll both be—as we say—rubbed out, when I'm through. You know too much already."

His accents were polished, in keeping with his groomed, respectable appear-

ance. More than any other underworld character, Mike Larnin was the closest approach to the scientific, brainy crime leader. He was, in effect, Benton's "master-mind" criminal.

He went on:

"Briefly, I saw the possibilities of your new discovery, Dr. Balstine, a year ago. I came to you as a fellow scientist—I've done considerable laboratory work in my unique career—to work out a projector. I pretended interest in your altruistic scheme of stopping war. But my real idea was this greatest of all crime coups!"

"I was so blind—blind!" groaned Dr. Balstine.

"When the wave-projector was completed," continued the master criminal, "we waited for the next European crisis. But in the meantime I had sent my signal around, through the vast organization I had formed. The Crime Wave

was launched. When government agencies were about to stamp down, I started the projector secretly, one night, while you slept."

He waved a hand.

"That was yesterday, August 10th, 1940. I set the dial back a year, to August 10th, 1939. It robbed you, Dr. Balstine, of all memory of our connection. You didn't even know of the projector in your back yard. Nor of the metal headband shield we devised. Now, unfortunately, through the meddling of this reporter, you've found out, and will have to go with him. I don't need you any more, since the projector works perfectly."

Several policemen took Woodley in hand, and one of them turned off the memory-wave projector.



Alec
Gore

Larnin leered at them both, as though enjoying his cat-and-mouse role. Benton felt more sick than when the amnesia had first struck. They were trapped—doomed!

"The wave, as I foresaw," resumed the criminal leader, "made our coup an instant success. Like radio waves, this wave pulses over the whole earth—into every mind. The physiological Timesense in the mind is overthrown, set back a year. It doesn't take much power, since the mind-fields are very delicate. Less power, in fact, than any radio station. You'll remember we set up a radio-like aerial, Dr. Balstine. It looks no more than an amateur radio-sending outfit. No one will suspect it. I have diesel generators, and a supply of oil on hand, in case electricity fails, from the powerhouses."

"How long," asked Benton hoarsely, "are you going to keep the wave up?"

"About a month. In that time, my criminal organization will have just about all the ready cash, gold, jewels, and *lives* we planned to take." The man's cold eyes flashed fire. "The plunder of the world! I'll be the richest man alive when it's done! I'll get a portion of every haul, throughout the world. And"—grating laughter came from his lips—"this grand-scale emptying of the world's coffers will always be an 'unsolved' crime. For I've stolen time and memory with it!"

Benton bit his lip. He was right. When the time-wave was turned off, a month later, there would be no way of tracking down the criminals. There wouldn't be a single recorded clue!

Dr. Balstine's face was tortured. He had placed the blame on his own soul. He had made it possible for the lawless to empty the money-bags of earth.

THE master criminal straightened up. Stepping to the radio, he turned it

on. "I think you know what comes next!" he said suavely. He tuned organ music, and turned up the volume. His two men became alert, fingering their guns. Larnin held up his hand for the signal of death. . . .

Benton's hand had been creeping toward his pocket. He could feel the gun there, that he had brought along on a dim hunch, from Woodley's office. It was a hopeless chance, but he might plug one of them. He would try to get Larnin.

He flung himself forward, clutching for his gun.

A shot rang out—

Benton wondered why he wasn't hit. Good God—how long would it take him to get his hand out of his pocket? Ages seemed to pass, as in a nightmare.

More shots rang out. Still he wasn't hit!

He prayed for another second of this miracle as he brought up the gun he had finally jerked from his pocket. He leveled it for Larnin's chest.

He fired.

And then, suddenly, he realized he had shot a dead man!

Larnin had begun to fall a split second before, with a hole in his forehead! Benton sat up, dazed. Someone else had killed Larnin!

He looked around. Blue was a wonderful color, he thought, especially when it was the blue uniform of the police! Two of them were coming in from the sun-porch, stepping over the body of the thug they had shot. Two more came in from the front door, followed by rumple-haired Jim Woodley of the *Times-Star*. Benton never knew when he had been so glad to see his sour-faced chief.

"Just in time, it seems," the latter commented dryly. His eyes lighted up as he recognized the slain ringleader of crime on the floor.

"How did you happen to come here, with the cops, chief?" Benton asked the question that bewildered both himself and Dr. Balstine. The latter had sat through the shooting fray like a wooden image, too frightened to move.

"She did it," returned Woodley. "Called me on the phone right after you left. When I told her you'd gone looking for a criminal master-mind—which I thought was funny—she started in on me! What a tongue-lashing I got! Before I knew it I had called up the Chief of Police and requisitioned a squad. And here we are."

"She?" yelled Benton. "She who? You mean—"

A flying form came in the door and Benton stopped with his breath squeezed out, as *she* hugged him. The blue of Alicia Deane's eyes was even nicer than the police blue, he reflected.

He looked at her a moment. There was something he should remember about her. He had known it while wearing the shielding hat. But now he could only remember that he should remember something, not the thing itself!

"You love me!" he accused. "Let's get—"

He broke off and whirled, grasping Dr. Balstine's arm. "Go out and turn off that damned wave-projector," he said. "Take a couple of cops along in case any of Larnin's men are around."

He turned back to the girl. "—married!" he finished.

"No!" she said.

She drew three things out of her bag. "This key is the one for the new apartment you couldn't get in. This ring was at the jeweler's, to have another stone added after your pay-raise from the *Times-Star*. And this document is a marriage-license. I have all the proof. You can't get out of it, Larry Benton!"

"Out of what?" he gasped.

She looked up at him, smiling tenderly.

"We were married two months ago!"

A subtle hum that had existed in the air flicked out suddenly. A policeman had turned off the wave-projector, in back. Larry Benton remembered now. He bent to kiss his wife. He'd never forget again. He didn't want to.

Says Everybody is HYPNOTIZED

A strange method of mind and body control, that often leads to immense powers never before experienced, is announced by Edwin J. Dingle, F.R.G.S., well-known explorer and geographer. It is said to bring about almost unbelievable improvement in power of mind. Many report improvement in health. Others acquire superb bodily strength, secure better positions, turn failures into success. Often with surprising speed, talents, ability and a more magnetic personality are developed.

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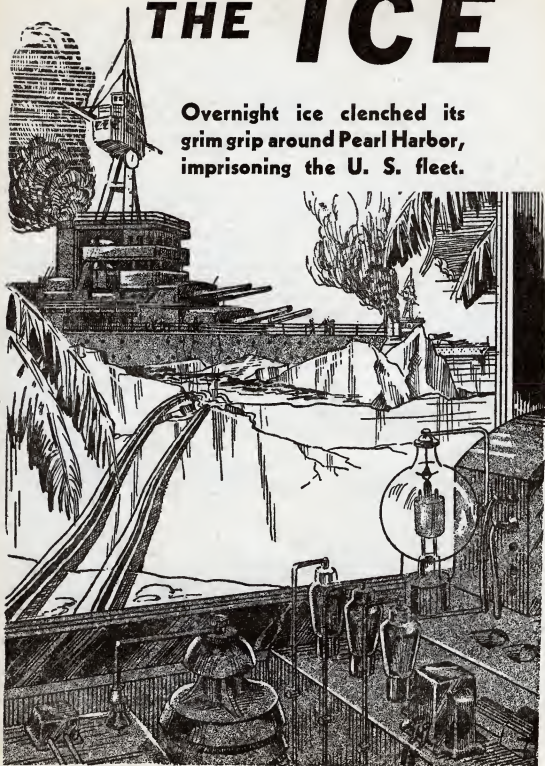
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THE ICE

Overnight ice clenched its
grim grip around Pearl Harbor,
imprisoning the U. S. fleet.



PLAGUE

By
**FREDERIC
ARNOLD
KUMMER, JR.**

CHAPTER I

Ice in the Tropics

SOFT, indirect light flooded the yacht's dining saloon, gleaming upon cut glass, hand-wrought silver, spotless linen. John Ogden, motioning to the Filipino boy to clear away the dessert dishes, nodded complacently; it was his boast that no ocean liner could equal the *Sea Sprite* in luxury or service. Moreover, the yacht

had proved an excellent investment. Many of Commercial Plastics' biggest deals had been consummated at this very table.

Tonight, however, there was no talk of business. Beaming behind a cloud

As the moments passed, Steve's heart sank. The battleships strained, but the ice was holding



of cigar smoke, Ogden studied the other three diners. Directly opposite him sat Anne, his daughter, slender, blond, assured . . . and, to a father who had been forced to assume a dual parental role, often bewildering. At her right was Steve Kendall, a lean, bronzed young giant, suggesting a professional athlete rather than a brilliant scientist. Ogden had invited him on this cruise with a view to obtaining his services for Commercial Plastics; but from the manner in which Kendall eyed Anne, Ogden was beginning to wonder if the rapprochement might not be progressing along more than purely business lines. The fourth member of the dinner party was Lieutenant Donald Castle, U. S. N., whose cherubic appearance belied the trigger brain and steel nerves of an ace navy pilot. His father had been an old friend of Ogden's and the financier, learning that the fleet was lying at Pearl Harbor, some ten miles away, had invited Castle to spend an evening aboard the *Sea Sprite*.

"So this is your first visit to the Islands, eh?" The Lieutenant smiled. "Well, you'll have a treat. There's so much to do, so many places to see. Waikiki, of course, and Kapiolani Park. Koko Crater, the volcanos, Barking Sands . . . it's hard to say where to start. *Haoles* all agree that the Islands are the most beautiful on earth!"

Anne glanced through the porthole at the lights of Honolulu, a cluster of bright fireflies at the base of the purple Koolau mountains.

"Beautiful," she nodded. "But hardly as warm as I'd thought. Why even here in the cabin it's almost cold!"

"I've noticed that, today," Castle admitted. "Even the *kamaaina*, the old timers, say it's the coldest snap they've

ever felt. The surf was too icy for swimming this morning, and that's something."

Steve Kendall laughed.

"I bet the gobs are pleased," he chuckled. "All set for a big time ashore after the maneuvers, and a cold wave spoiling everything. . . ."

The Lieutenant shook his head. "No shore leave's been allowed so far. I had the devil's own time getting the week-end off. . . ."

"Why?" Mr. Ogden demanded. "Expecting trouble?"

"In a way." Castle's round face fell into thoughtful lines. "Ever since the Japs took over China, they've been pretty cocky. And there've been reports lately that large numbers of troop transports are being assembled at Yokohama. Though it strikes me the Japs 'd be crazy to start anything. Our fleet's nearly double theirs in tonnage, to say nothing of technical improvements."

"Interesting." Ogden nodded ponderously. "Maybe the radio may have some news bulletins." He snapped on the television set built into the bulkhead. A fierce crackle of static met their ears, while the screen was black with dancing dots. "Hmm." Ogden frowned. "Must be out of order. I'll have Sparks look at it in the morning. Well, war scares are too common these days even to afford a topic of conversation. How about a rubber of bridge?"

The bridge game lasted late; it was nearly midnight before the players said goodnight, retired to their cabins. Steve Kendall, standing before the port-hole of his room, stared at the moonlit water. Lieutenant Castle had promised to show them the island on the morrow, before returning to Pearl Harbor. Steve grinned in anticipation. He and Anne about to enter this paradise of silver beaches, graceful palms,

exotic flowers, and soft music. It was hard to think of going back to his laboratory, the long hours of research, after such a trip. Even harder to think of leaving Anne. Perhaps . . . With a quick glance at the girl's photograph on the bureau, he climbed into bed.

STEVE was in the midst of a somewhat arctic dream largely peopled by polar bears and penguins, when he heard the sound of voices, the pounding of excited fists upon the door of the cabin. Half-awake and shivering he groped into a bathrobe, snapped back the lock. Ogden stood upon the threshold, his ruddy face unnaturally pale.

"Steve! The damndest thing's happened! I . . . we . . . we're . . ." he halted, fumbling for words.

"What is it?" Kendall barked. "Ship sinking? Fire?"

"No. The ship's safe . . . so far. I . . . I couldn't sleep. Too cold. So about half an hour ago I went up on deck. And . . . and . . ." Mr. Ogden crossed the cabin, drew back the heavy chintz curtains before the porthole. "Look!"

Steve peered over the financier's shoulder . . . then suddenly gasped. Before them lay dawn-lit Oahu, a bright green emerald streaked with dark folds where lurk the valley rains. Distant Diamond Head, the silver, palm-edged strip of Waikiki, the white walls of Honolulu half hidden in the foliage behind the Aloha Tower. Verdant, exotic, exquisite, it seemed a tropical paradise . . . down to the water's edge. But between the yacht and the shore there was a queer whitish stretch, glistening in the brilliant sunrise. A stretch without waves, without breakers, as flat as a table, above which little wisps of condensed moisture hung. *Honolulu harbor was a sheet of ice!*

"Good God!" Kendall gasped. "It's frozen! Ice . . . in the tropics!"

"Unless we're both crazy!" Ogden smiled crookedly. "I . . . I'll go wake the others!"

As his host left, Steve hastily dressed, donning his heaviest suit, his top-coat. In the corridor he met Anne, just emerging from her cabin.

"Steve!" The girl's voice shook. "What . . . what is it?"

"Wish I knew." He took her arm. "Sunlit shores, lazy surf caressing the warm golden sands! I'd like to meet the man who writes those travel ads!"

Mounting to the *Sea Sprite's* deck, they saw Mr. Ogden, Castle, and McRimmon, the yacht's captain, standing by the rail. From shore to shore the harbor was one vast ice floe, broken only by the fishing boats, the liners, the pleasure craft, locked in its grip. Further out, in what had formerly been open sea, the Pacific was frozen as far as the eye could reach. And the land breeze was heavy with the scent of croton, of plumeria, of ginger blossoms!

Don Castle turned, nodded a grave good morning.

"'Fraid we'll have to skip our tour of the island today," he said. "I'd better get back to Pearl Harbor at once. In this emergency. . ."

"Of course!" Ogden agreed. "We'll drive you there. I've a car ashore I hired for our visit. I think we'll all feel better on shore with the sea doing tricks like this!" He turned to McRimmon. "You say you noticed other people walking ashore from boats?"

The yacht's captain nodded, blowing on his chilled fingers.

"Looks solid enough," Ogden said. "Have our bags sent to the Grand Hotel, McRimmon. We're going ashore!"

Climbing down the ladder, the little party struck out across the ice, cautiously at first, then more boldly as its

thickness became apparent. Anne shook a bewildered head. Entering Honolulu by crossing an ice floe! Incredible!

IT was some twenty minutes later when the shivering group reached the docks, climbed up to palm-lined Bishop Street. The city was gripped by awe, fear. Quaking with cold brown and yellow skinned natives stared in wonder at the "hard water," work of every sort was at a standstill. Pushing their way through the crowd, the party from the yacht at length reached Kalakana Avenue, the pink-walled Grand Hotel, where Ogden's hired car awaited them.

The drive from Honolulu to Pearl Harbor was one which stamped itself indelibly upon Steve Kendall's mind. Along the shore stood shivering beach-boys, clinging hopelessly to their surf boards. Outrigger canoes lay upon the sand, like huge beetles killed by the cold. Already crimson poinciana, pale pink hibiscus hedges, and brick-red bougainvillea vines were beginning to wither, to droop. Within a month, Steve realized, this garden spot in the Pacific would become a desolate barren waste . . . a frozen paradise!

At length they reached the entrance of the naval base. A blue-clad marine, rifle in hand, stepped forward to bar their way.

"I'll have to leave you here." Castle climbed from the car. "Sorry things had to turn out like this. I hope before you leave you'll have a chance to see the real Hawaii . . ." He broke off suddenly, snapping to attention.

The others turned. Behind them was a large open car, in the rear of which sat a lean, weathered man wearing an admiral's braid.

"Well, well!" Ogden exclaimed. "Buck Mayo, you old scoundrel!"

The admiral glanced up in surprise, smiled.

"John Ogden!" he exclaimed. "I heard your yacht was at Honolulu, planned to pay you a call. But with this incredible condition. . ."

"I understand." Ogden motioned the others forward. "You remember my daughter, Anne. And this is Mr. Kendall, one of our most brilliant young physicists. . ."

"Physicist, eh?" Admiral Mayo gave Steve a searching glance. "Maybe he can help us out. Got any ideas about all this, son?"

"Not yet," Steve replied. "But I'd like to know how far out the ice extends, whether it surrounds the entire island."

"Why not have a look? We've already sent scouts out, of course, but I'd like a scientist's opinion." The admiral beckoned to the rigid Castle. "Lieutenant, see that Mr. Kendall is taken up by plane. Give him any information he wishes. We've got to get to the bottom of this!"

"But" . . . Anne glanced curiously at Mayo . . . "Why is it so important? A blow to the islanders, of course, yet I don't see why you navy men are so excited. . ."

"My dear Miss Ogden!" Admiral Mayo's voice was grave. "I'm afraid you don't realize the seriousness of the situation! The entire United States fleet is concentrated in Pearl Harbor . . . is frozen in! And as long as it's ice-bound, our west coast is defenseless!" He turned. "Good luck to you, Mr. Kendall! We'll need it, I'm afraid!"

THE little observation plane rose like a bird from the Yorktown's flight deck, soaring upward with breathtaking speed. Kendall, peering through the window of the cabin, stared

incredulously at the sight below. Battleships, cruisers, destroyers, carriers . . . row upon row of grey ships held immobile by the green, glittering ice. Sea-planes, too, were helpless, for without water they could neither take off, nor land.

"Just so much scrap iron," Castle muttered, nosing the plane skyward, "as far as defending America goes!"

Steve glanced ahead. The Pacific seemed one great sheet of ice.

"Keep on!" he said. "It's bound to stop somewhere."

Don Castle nodded, headed the plane west. Steve relaxed in his seat, thinking. At the naval base before taking off, he had learned that an analysis of the strange ice showed minute particles of deuterium, heavy hydrogen, in the congealed lumps of H₂O. Heavy hydrogen! Somehow it struck a familiar chord in the back of his brain. But what . . .

"Steve!" Castle's fingers dug into his arm. "Look!"

Kendall peered through the window. Ahead of them, fully fifty miles from the harbor, lay a dark blue line. Open water! And skirting the edge of the ice was a sleek, low destroyer!

"Fifty miles of ice!" Steve muttered. "Seems to be in a big semi-circle along the entire southern shore of the island! Queer! It's almost as though . . ." He broke off, staring. "What ship is that?"

Castle nosed the plane down, examined the destroyer closely.

"Flying no flag," he muttered. "No markings other than the number on her bow. I'd say she was Japanese, though. But what she's doing here . . ."

"Why not follow her awhile?" Steve suggested. "I'm curious."

Castle nodded. The destroyer had turned north. Swinging about in lazy circles, the plane remained above her.

At length, after an hour, Castle's eyes narrowed. Smoke was visible ahead.

"Ships," the pilot exclaimed. "Half a dozen of 'em. And liners don't travel in groups. Looks as though our friend below has been out to verify the good news that the U. S. fleet is bottled up, and is returning to report. I'm going to have a look at those ships."

Her motors open wide, the plane swept past the destroyer, headed for the columns of smoke. In an amazingly short time a group of ships was visible on the horizon. Gazing at them, Castle frowned.

"Six . . . no, seven . . . anti-aircraft ships. That is, old, out-moded cruisers with their main batteries removed and their decks filled with a. a. guns. And five big aircraft carriers. But those other ships beat me!"

Steve glanced down. The anti-aircraft ships, the carriers, were ranged in a ring, as though to protect the three strange vessels in the center of the circle. Twice the size of a battleship, these central vessels, without cabins, port-holes, superstructure. More than anything else, they resembled huge barges. Black smoke poured in clouds from their funnels, yet the ships did not move. Hanging over the side of each of these queer craft were thick copper cables, glistening in the sun.

"Damn funny!" Kendall muttered. "Unless . . . Don! Those crazy barges must be power units! You see? Guarded against planes, but not against ships! They aren't afraid of the fleet, because they know it's bottled up in Pearl Harbor! And those cables leading from the power barges are supplying juice for something . . . something causing that ice . . ."

STEVE broke off, clutching at the control panel for support. The plane had heeled over violently, one of

its windows shattered. Several white mushrooms of smoke appeared in the air nearby. As Castle brought the plane to an even keel, Steve could see a red stain spreading over the Lieutenant's shoulder.

"You're hit!" he exclaimed. "Is it bad!"

"A scratch!" Don muttered bitterly. "Just enough to keep me out of action for a week!" Wincing slightly he tugged at the stick. "This anti-aircraft fire is plenty heavy! We're heading for home, pronto!"

The plane leaped forward as he opened the throttle. From the carriers below pursuit ships were being catapulted into the air.

"Don't worry about them," Don grinned. "This job'll do six hundred. Before they gain any altitude we'll be safe over Pearl Harbor."

Steve watched the puffs of smoke die away behind them, the enemy planes fade into the distance. Suddenly he leaned forward, snapped on the small radio. A blare of static filled the cabin.

"Odd!" Castle exclaimed. "Just like Ogden's radio last night!"

"Maybe it's not so odd after all," Steve said slowly. And taking an envelope from his pocket he commenced an involved calculation.

In a few minutes the plane was over the harbor again. Tiny figures dotted the ice and, as they watched, a shattering series of explosions ran across the harbor mouth.

"Dynamite!" Castle grunted. "Not a chance that way. They told me before we left that test borings showed the ice to be forty feet thick. Still, I suppose it helps old Mayo's conscience to try. But it'll take more than . . ." He halted abruptly. "Good God! Schofield Barracks!"

Steve followed his gaze. Some ten miles inland, easily visible from their

height, lay a scattering of white buildings. Above the largest building great pillars of smoke, red tongues of flame, leaped skyward.

"The hangars!" Don cried. "You see? Four hundred army planes in danger of being wiped out! Sabotage, of course! They're more than a hundred and fifty thousand Japs living in the islands, any one of whom would risk dying for the Mikado if he could destroy Schofield Barracks! It's war, all right! The dirty kind of war!"

Steve shook his head. The fleet frozen in, its big seaplanes useless, and now the army air units on fire! Which left only the few hundred planes on the carriers. . . .

"Let's land!" he exclaimed. "We've got to work fast!"

CHAPTER II

Attack on America

ADMIRAL MAYO, seated at his desk in base headquarters, seemed gray, gaunt, harassed. His eyes narrowed at sight of Don's bandaged shoulder.

"Well?" he barked. "What'd you find out?"

Briefly Castle reported their flight, the strange ships off shore. When he had finished, the admiral shook an incredulous head.

"You're trying to tell me that the Japs are causing this ice field?" he said. "But it's ridiculous! How could they possibly freeze hundreds of square miles of sea water? And granting that they were doing it, we're still technically at peace with Japan. There's no proof that they're responsible for this ice. Might be some strange natural phenomenon. And the fire at Schofield may be an accident. We've no evidence of sabotage, yet. As for

warning shots being fired at your plane . . . well, the U. S. fleet would do the same if a Jap plane came snooping around during manoeuvres. It's not good enough! There's nothing I'd like better than a brush with the Japs, but I'm not plunging our country into war because of your suspicions! Give me proof, Mr. Kendall, and I'll show you how this navy can fight! But until . . ." He paused as the radio operator at the other end of the room spoke.

"Message from Guam, sir!" he exclaimed. "I think I can get it through!"

"Right!" Mayo nodded.

For a few moments the operator adjusted dials. On the television screen, blurred and distorted by interference, a man's haggard face appeared, and a voice from the speaker rose above the static.

"Guam calling Pearl Harbor!" it droned. "Calling Pearl Harbor!"

"Go ahead, Guam!" the operator replied. "You're coming through!"

"Thank God!" The man at Guam paused as a deep boom drowned out his voice. "Jap destroyers are bombarding us! Without fortifications of any sort we're helpless!" Another roll of shell fire smothered his voice. "They're trying to silence this radio station! A big Jap squadron with over a hundred troop ships passed here about an hour ago. Planning attack on west coast, we believe! Relay this call to our fleet wherever it is! We've got enough tonnage to whip them! Have our fleet intercept them! Notify U. S. fleet . . ." Suddenly the man's voice ceased and the television screen went blank.

"You wanted proof!" Steve said grimly. "What do you think now?"

"You're right!" Admiral Mayo cried. "Troop ships and the Jap fleet . . . heading for America! And us locked here in the ice! Over three hundred

fighting ships about as useful for defending the States as so many garbage scows! Operator, relay the Guam message to Chief of Operations and say that until I hear to the contrary I'm proceeding on the assumption that a state of war exists between the U. S. and Japan! Mr. Kendall, you claim these ships off the coast here are causing the ice jam! That's a little hard to swallow, but whatever their business in Kanai Channel, they're enemy ships and as such must be prevented from laying mines or doing other damage. We're attacking by air!"

"But if they've got more carriers . . ." Steve began.

Admiral Mayo glared at him from beneath grizzled brows.

"This is a fighting navy, young man!" he grated. "It's our job to inflict what damage we can on the forces of any nation attacking the United States! Your scientific ideas may be all right, but they're not sinking any Jap ships! Mr. Ogden and his daughter are at my quarters here since we were obliged to commandeer their car in sending men to fight the fire at Schofield. I advise you to join them until we can arrange to send you back to Honolulu. Lieutenant Castle will show you the way."

FOR a moment Kendall's eyes hardened, then, as Don touched his arm, he wheeled about, left base headquarters.

"It's madness!" Steve burst out. "We can't put four hundred planes in the air! And with five Jap carriers, seven a. a. cruisers . . ."

Don Castle's gaze swept the long line of ships, grim, formidable in spite of the ice that locked them in.

"It's the navy way," he said slowly. "Shall we go?"

Admiral Mayo's temporary quarters

ashore were across the harbor, near Aiea, a small brick bungalow surrounded by drooping, frost-touched hau trees, algarobas, and ape-ape. Steve and Don mounted the lanai, rang the bell, and were admitted by a Chinese house boy.

"Steve!" Anne came forward to meet them. "Did you discover anything? We . . . Oh, Don! You . . . you're wounded!"

Castle nodded, told of the strange ships lying offshore.

"And we're going to attack them?" Mr. Ogden exclaimed eagerly.

Don Castle motioned toward the window. Through it they could see squadron after squadron of planes soaring from the ice-bound carriers.

"We can follow them by television," he said, snapping on the big set upon the admiral's desk. "An observation plane with broadcasting units will cover the flight from above."

Again there was the familiar roar of static, dancing dots on the screen. Through the blur of interference they could see great wedge-shaped formations of planes high above the field of greenish ice. Breathless, they watched the ice give way to blue water, watched the squadrons turn north.

Suddenly the observation plane seemed to swing off to one side. Then, as its television pick-up units were adjusted, there appeared on the screen a cluster of tiny distant vessels from which planes were rising like angry bees to meet the attackers.

"Oh!" Anne whispered. "Nearly twice as many as we have!"

Steve nodded somberly, turned his gaze to the radio once more. Impossible to tell what was happening, now. Formations were broken up, speedy fighters shot back and forth across the screen below the observation ship. The sea was littered with wrecked planes,

and the chatter of machine guns seemed like added static. The Japs, superior in numbers, fought with fatalistic recklessness. Time after time in this giant dog-fight they deliberately plunged their machines into the American planes, heedless of their own lives so long as they were able to account for one of the enemy. The sky grew dark from the smoke of burning planes.

Almost as quickly as it had begun the battle was over. Of the Japanese planes which had risen to meet the attackers, not one remained in the air, while less than fifty American ships had survived. These, gathering into a loose formation, turned toward the ring of cruisers. Nearer and nearer, they swept, diving. Watching, Steve felt a thrill of hope. Had some unknown force silenced the enemy a. a. guns? The remnants of the American squadron were near, now, were heading for the three power ships. In another minute . . .

All at once a deafening roar issued from the speaker, and the decks of the cruisers were blanketed in smoke. A maelstrom of explosions burst about the attacking planes, a torrent of steel and lead poured into them. As if by magic a dozen of the bombers disintegrated in mid-air.

Missiles were dropping from the planes, now, and two of the cruisers heeled over, listing badly. From the others, however, the hurricane of fire continued unabated. One after another the planes spun downward. Suddenly the roar of guns ceased. The American squadron had been destroyed!

"GONE!" Don choked. "We won . . . and lost! Twice as many Jap planes, two of their cruisers, wiped out. But their power units are not harmed! And without planes we can't touch them! To remain here, helpless,

while their main fleet covers a landing on the west coast! It's maddening! If only we could do something, get free of this damned ice . . ."

"Right!" Steve snapped. "And we're going to try it! D'you think there's such a thing as an applause-meter in Honolulu? The kind they use to determine, by the volume of applause, the winners of radio amateur contests?"

"An applause-meter?" Don repeated. "Why I suppose KTH has one. They keep up with all the latest gadgets. But I don't see . . ."

"I'll explain," Steve said, "later! Right now I'm heading for Honolulu if I have to walk!"

IT was bitter cold out on the ice; Steve felt as though the blood in his veins were freezing. Turning, he glanced back. The island of Oahu was only a dark blur on the horizon. Before them stretched a glistening, interminable field of ice.

With Steve were Mr. Ogden, Anne, and several members of the *Sea Sprite's* crew. The men carried drills, picks, shovels, while one of them dragged a rude sled. Upon the sled was a small radio, sputtering violently, and a peculiar square box, its face set with dials and switches. Between the box and the radio were several storage batteries.

Ogden, his lips blue from cold, glanced curiously at the apparatus.

"How much further?" he asked. "And I'd like to know just what . . ."

"Sorry." Steve bent to examine the dials on the square box. "I'll have to ask you to remain silent. The instruments are sensitive to any noise."

Ogden shrugged, plodded on. An hour passed with no sound other than the crackle of the radio. At length, as Steve paused to read the dials once more, his eyes lit up. With a gesture

he motioned the men pulling the sled to turn back toward the island. They had taken scarcely a dozen steps before he stopped them, commenced sliding the sled back and forth, reading the gauges on the box with each move. All at once he straightened up, nodding.

"All right." He drew the sled aside, indicated the spot which it had covered. "Dig here!"

As the men commenced to hack at the ice, Anne came forward, her cheeks glowing from the crisp air.

"Ready to let us in on the secret, now?" she laughed.

"Sure." Steve smiled. "The radio is a little battery set, and the box is an applause-meter borrowed from station KTH. It records the volume of any sound with hair-line accuracy. Now you've noticed the static that's been ruining all radio reception since this ice business started, and you remember those cables I told you were running from the Jap power ships. I figured those cables must lead to something . . . something that was causing the water to freeze. And the source of the continual static must be this thing the cables lead to. As we approached this object beneath the ice, the static on our radio should increase in volume. Not perceptible enough for human ears, but easily discernible with an instrument as delicate as the applause-meter. A few feet north or south of this spot the static decreases. East or west it remains the same. So this ought to be about right."

"Very interesting, Steve," Ogden nodded. "What do you expect to find?"

"I don't know," Kendall said slowly, "but I can make a fairly good guess."

FOR hours the men from the *Sea Sprite* dug into the ice, removing great chunks as they sank the shaft

five, ten, fifteen feet below the surface. Buckets and ropes were necessary to remove the debris, and the men, although working in shifts, were all but frozen. Steve, dragged to the surface after a half-hour stretch, frowned hopelessly. Had his calculations gone astray? Was the object he sought below the thick layer of ice?

A shout from the bottom of the shaft interrupted his despondent reflections. Hastily Steve and the others crowded about the hole, gazed down. Dimly discernible in the green cool depths was a round, buoy-like float, supporting a heavy length of copper wire, the ends of which disappeared into the ice.

"Nothing but a wire!" the man at the bottom of the shaft called, and bent to pick it up.

"No!" Steve cried. "Don't touch . . .!"

It was too late. The man's gloved hand had closed about the wire. Suddenly he was stiff, motionless, a pallid statue. With a quick leap Steve swung over the edge, slid down the rope to the bottom of the shaft. Passing an arm about the man's waist, he signalled to the others to draw them up. A moment later they were on the surface.

"What is it?" Anne watched Kendall rub, knead the unconscious man's arm.

"Frozen," he muttered. "That wire's bad medicine!" Then, as the sailor, his circulation restored, sat up, Kendall turned to Mr. Ogden. "We're heading for shore! At once! I've got to see Admiral Mayo!"

CHAPTER III

A Race Against Time

IT was only by contacting Don Castle that Steve was able to reach the admiral. He found Mayo at head-

quarters, poring over a mass of cablegrams.

"Well?" the fleet commander glanced sharply at his visitor. "I suppose you've got a sure-fire method of melting the ice, too. Every half hour I get more suggestions from Washington. None of 'em worth a damn!" He glanced at the map on the wall. "Figuring the transports will keep the Jap fleet down to eighteen knots, they ought to make about four hundred and fifty miles a day. Already they must be nearing Wake Island. They'll pass Hawaii in six days, reach the U. S. in ten or twelve. If you've got any way of getting us out of here in the next week, I'm willing to listen."

"Maybe I can." Steve told of his discovery in the ice.

"A wire!" Mayo's eyes lit up. "But . . . we've only to cut it . . .!"

"No, good, sir." Kendall shook his head. "Imagine those two big cables from the power ships as the handle of a broom . . . a handle too deep under ice and water for us to reach. And imagine hundreds of these smaller wires as the straws of the broom, radiating from the end of the big cables. They've been laid by fishing boats, trawlers, I suppose, operating at night beyond the three mile limit. To rip them all up . . . and some, no doubt, like the main cables, are in the water beneath the ice . . . would be impossible. The Japs figured out all the angles when they planned this thing."

"You mean" . . . the admiral shuffled the mass of papers on his desk . . . "that there's no way of getting rid of this damned ice? That we're to remain here, helpless, while the Jap fleet . . ."

"No!" Steve explained. "I think there is a way."

Admiral Mayo stared at him. "What's to be done?"

"Just this!" Kendall exclaimed. "The field from those cables is of an extremely high frequency. If it can be duplicated and a similar vibration, 180 degrees out of phase, tapped into that wire we dug up, then its effect will be nullified! I was working on high frequency fields before Mr. Ogden asked me on this cruise. Give me the use of your workshops here, your ship-repair equipment, and I think I can set up a similar field to counteract it!"*

For a moment the admiral remained silent, staring out over the ice-floe that marked Pearl Harbor. Before he could reply, an officer approached with a handful of cablegrams.

"They're having fits back home," he announced. "Trying to evacuate the west coast cities, sabotage driving the army crazy, Congress wrapping everything up in yards of red tape. And here's one from Wake Island! The Japanese fleet was observed from the radio station there. Seventeen battleships of the Negato and Mitsui class, thirty-five cruisers. . . ."

Mayo did not seem to be listening. Pencil in hand, he was making rapid calculations. Abruptly he straightened up, eyes cold.

"Mr. Kendall," he said slowly, "the enemy fleet will pass here on the sixteenth, going eastward. Get us out of here on or before that time and we'll see

that they never reach San Francisco! I don't pretend to know how your machines work, but I'm willing to gamble on them. Anything's better than being holed up here while the States are invaded. From now on the entire resources of this naval base, this fleet, are at your disposal. God grant that you succeed!"

THE six days that followed were a mad delirium to Steve Kendall. The naval yard was, it seemed, an inferno of roaring furnaces, daubing the sky with smoke by day, searing it with ruddy flame at night. Half-naked gobs, like soot-smeared demons from the pit, worked in shifts, moulding the stubborn masses of copper and steel. There were other phantoms in this nightmare world, too, particularly the legions of figures and formulae that marched in endless rows across Steve's pad, haunting him, torturing him with the fear of error. They seemed always before his eyes, dancing a tantalizing jig, arranging and rearranging themselves in an infinity of bewildering combinations.

As to what actually occurred during those six days, Steve had little remembrance. Certain kaleidoscopic pictures stuck in his brain, but for the most part it was a feverish dream. He remembered the time, though whether it was by day or night he could not recall,

Thus, one oxygen atom has an atomic weight of 16, while eight deuterium atoms weigh 16.1088. And if an oxygen atom were broken down into eight units, these latter would be forced to draw energy in the form of heat from their surroundings before becoming true heavy hydrogen atoms! Figuring on a basis of grams, the conversion of sixteen grams of oxygen to heavy hydrogen would absorb .1088 grams, or nearly two and a third trillion calories of heat. And the reduction of one pound of oxygen from the H_2O would freeze nearly a cubic mile of sea water. That is the essential basis of the process. Oxygen atoms break down into heavy hydrogen atoms, absorbing energy from the surrounding water until, with all heat exhausted and the water frozen, the reaction ceases.—Ed.

* The method used by the Japs to freeze the ocean around the islands is simple. Water is sixteenth-eightieths oxygen by weight. Oxygen consists of 16 units of mass, or the equivalent of 8 heavy hydrogen atoms. Assuming that the sunken wires emanate vibrations, produce an electromagnetic field of a tremendously high frequency and very short wave-length, specifically suited to a certain reaction, they act as a catalyst. We know that x-rays can produce changes in crystalline structures. These vibrations produced a similar change, the splitting up of the oxygen atoms into 8 heavy hydrogen atoms. This accounts for the presence of particles of deuterium in the ice.

The atomic weight of heavy hydrogen instead of being, as is often supposed, 2, is actually 2.0136. This additional atomic weight represents energy.

when the main condenser, so laboriously constructed, had slipped from the traveling crane, smashed upon the floor. A certain exhausted and hollow-eyed spectre who answered to the name of Castle had wept like a child at sight of the shattered fragments. Then there was the day when the big copper coil, taken from the electrically-driven *Saratoga*, had tipped on its shoring, teetered precariously, threatening to crush the delicate apparatus below. He, Steve, had somehow forced wedges beneath the coil, supervised construction of a crazy patchwork of props and guy-wires to hold it into place. And when, after hours of unremitting toil, the coil had been finally made fast, he had collapsed in a heap upon the floor, only to be back on the job again within twenty minutes. Then, too, Steve remembered various people talking to him from time to time. Mr. Ogden, his face drawn in grave, tired lines, Anne, very pale, pleading with him to rest, Admiral Mayo, a little grayer, a little more hollow eyed, but erect, immaculate, and somehow reassuring.

Piece by piece, in one of the great graving docks, the mass of apparatus mounted skyward. No time to make much equipment . . . it had to be commandeered from the various power plants and factories about Honolulu. And always the ingenious navy engineers found some way over or under, some piece of metal from their stores that could be reshaped to fill the bill. Once it seemed that the whole endeavor must fail for lack of silver wire . . . until some unknown genius instituted a door to door collection of Honolulu's silver service to be melted and drawn into wire. Gradually the huge jumble of machinery grew, took definite form.

Steve remembered the last day vividly. He was standing by the improvised control panel, dwarfed by the

towering machinery, making interminable calculations. Suddenly, across the great drydock, he saw Don Castle break into an awkward caper, saw gaunt navy engineers slapping one another on the back, croaking, "She's done! She's done!"

Done? Steve straightened up dazedly. What was done? Could it be possible that . . .? Curiously he studied the rows of giant condensers, the gleaming coils, the bulky transformers . . . studied them with a stranger's eye, as though he had never before seen them. Then, as his gaze swept the mass of metal, realization gripped him. It was finished! Everything was ready! He had only to move his finger for current from Honolulu's electrical system to pour into the great machine, for the super-high frequency vibrations to sweep through the gleaming cable out across the ice into the network of wires offshore! But would it work? Would the new wave, 180 degrees out of phase, nullify the one the Japs were pouring into the wires? And, the strange wave nullified, would the heavy hydrogen atoms recombine once more, revert to oxygen, giving off enormous quantities of heat?

SUDDENLY Steve shook the cobwebs from his brain. A wave of excitement seemed to have gripped the naval base. Men were hurrying across the ice toward the frozen vessels, smoke began to pour from the rows of funnels, the decks of the ships were being stripped for action. As the gaunt workers in the graving dock stared, puzzled, a breathless, red-faced young ensign dashed toward them through the maze of machinery.

"Mr. Kendall!" he gasped. "Which one of you is Mr. Kendall?"

"Here!" Steve advanced, a grimy, bearded scarecrow. "What's up?"

"The . . . the enemy fleet's been sighted by our observation post in the hills!" the ensign exclaimed. "They're passing through Kanai Channel on their way eastward! Admiral Mayo requests that you act at once! If the fleet can get out of here before dark we'll be able to intercept them! It's now or never!"

Steve stared for a moment at the ice-floes, ruddy in the late afternoon sun, then sprang to the control panel.

"Right!" he snapped. "Tell Admiral Mayo that we're commencing operations at once!" Lunging forward, he snapped the main switch.

At once, like a walking giant, the great mass of metal came to life. Light leaped between spark gaps, a smell of ozone filled the drydock, big transformers sang a song of power. Louder and louder, the whine rose, until it was a steady roar. Minute after minute slipped by. Steve bit his lip. If only there had been time for tests, for a final check! He glanced at the low, rakish *New Mexico*, close inshore. On her bridge was a cluster of blue-clad figures, among them Admiral Mayo. Motionless, they were like stern statues, their eyes on the shining fields of ice.

As the moments passed, Steve's heart sank. The long lines of frozen ships were like greyhounds straining at the leash. And still the ice held them with its cold relentless grip! Five minutes, ten, without apparent change! Steve's bloodshot eyes swung to the maze of humming, crackling apparatus. He had failed! The fleet was imprisoned here without chance of escape! And the Japanese forces, not a hundred miles away, passing serenely by on their mission of destruction, of conquest. . . .

A booming, crackling sound broke into Steve's bitter thoughts. Automatically he turned in the direction of

the noise . . . and his heart stood still! A vague, ghostly mist was rising from the ice; through it he could see great jagged lines, dark zig-zags on the white floes! More and more cracks appeared in the ice, and the booming sounds increased as the glistening sheet broke up!

CHEERS were echoing throughout the naval base, now. Slowly, majestically, the great battle-wagons were moving forward, their armored bows crunching through the skim of ice, opening a channel for the lighter cruisers and destroyers. Seaplanes, huge patrol bombers were in motion, taxiing toward open water . . . submarines, tiny mosquito boats were breaking free, nosing cautiously through the cakes of swift-melting ice. Faster and faster the mighty fleet moved, as the white spots dwindled, heading into the fiery sunset!

"Free!" Don Castle shouted. "By Gosh, Steve, you've done it! Now if only the attack succeeds . . .!" He seized Kendall's arm. "Come on! We can watch from the new Koolai observation post! Hurry!"

Dazedly, Steve nodded, followed him from the dock. Utterly exhausted, he seemed to be living a dream. Vaguely he remembered meeting Anne, Mr. Ogden, then a wild, furious drive up into the hills. At length, just as darkness fell, they slid to a stop before the grey metal tower of the observation post.

"Look!" Mr. Ogden pointed toward the horizon. Faint, far-off, like northern lights were red streaks of fire, cutting the opaque tropic darkness! A rolling intermittent rumble was borne by the sea breeze!

"They're in action!" Castle cried. "Off Kanai Channel! Damn this darkness!"

Steve stared at the flickering lights, drooping from fatigue. A moment later Don returned, breathless.

"Code reports coming in!" he exclaimed. "We've lost the *Astoria*, the *Brooklyn*, and half a dozen destroyers! And the *Maryland's* pulled out of line, badly damaged! Can't tell yet what we've done to the enemy! All we can do is fire at the flash of their guns!"

Anne nodded, very pale, turned toward the sea once more. Tense, anxious minutes passed. A half-hour, an hour, and still the guns, like distant thunder, roared their deadly chorus. More messages reached the post, telling of ships lost or put out of action. Then, with startling suddenness the red glare on the horizon winked out.

"What is it?" Mr. Ogden muttered.

"Have the Japs won? Have we been —?"

Shouts from the observation post drowned his voice. A man's figure appeared, silhouetted in the doorway.

"We did it!" he cried. "The enemy fleet's been wiped out! Took 'em by surprise in the channel, blew 'em to bits! We've won! Won!"

"Steve!" Anne turned to him, her eyes shining. "This is your victory! You alone made it possible!" She gazed at the harbor far below, its surface unmarred by ice. "You've given the islanders their tropical paradise again!"

Steve grinned, slipped an arm about her shoulders.

"It's always paradise," he whispered, "as long as you're here!"

« SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION »

RECENTLY, in New York, an unusual event occurred. Science fiction readers held a World Convention. It was unusual enough to warrant the weekly newsmagazine *Time* giving it two columns. But *Time*, according to *AMAZING STORIES* readers Mark Reinsberg and Erle Korschak, who attended the convention, missed a few important facts. Their story follows:

The 1st World Science Fiction Convention is over but it will live long in the minds of the near two hundred fans, and celebrities who jammed the Convention hall on July 2nd in New York City. Sponsored by New Fandom, an organization of science fiction fans, the plans were two years in the making, and science fiction owes this energetic organization a vote of thanks for the success of their undertaking.



Mark Reinsberg

Even before 10:00 A. M. when the doors swung open for the morning session, a large crowd had gathered outside. We had met several fans enroute to the Convention and were not alone as we were greeted by Sam Moskowitz and James V. Taurasi, in charge of affairs.

Things got started with a bang. The morning session was to be one of general introductions, in which everyone was to get acquainted. Editors ferreted out their critics, fans met their penpals,

authors got together on stories and plots.

Surprises were forthcoming, people who had existed only as styles of writing stepped out as live characters, friends were made, precious secrets were revealed, choice items of news buzzed along.

In no time at all noon recess arrived and autograph hunters ceased their efforts, to duck out with fans and celebrities for a hurried lunch.

Promptly at 2:00 o'clock the Convention reconvened for its official opening. Everyone was re-



Erle Korschak

quired to register in the "guest book" in the foyer, where official convention books were sold and SF tags given out for handy identification.

Upstairs, special Convention fan magazines adorned a table and were quickly exhausted by enthusiastic buyers. Dozens of original drawings by Paul, Scott, Krupa, Fuqua, Wesso, and others

were scattered at strategic points along the walls, eliciting many longing glances from everyone. Quickly the chairs up in front were filled up, and there was a scramble for advantageous positions, for things were beginning to happen.

On the platform sat William S. Sykora, Chairman of the Convention Committee, Sam Moskowitz, and James V. Taurasi, while over to one corner of the room R. Van Houten prepared to take notes of every word uttered—officially.

Sam Moskowitz approached the microphone and gave the official welcome, followed by the reading of the minutes to the First National Science Fiction Convention held the previous year. Then Sykora gave an interesting speech entitled "Science Fiction and New Fandom" which was somewhat abbreviated due to lack of time.

Receiving a tremendous ovation upon his introduction, Frank R. Paul, who modestly declared, "I hadn't expected anything like this," delivered a talk on "Science Fiction, the Spirit of Youth."

A huge drawing by Paul, picturing a composite view of tomorrow, was a feature of the convention. The "grand old artist of Science Fiction" was supremely happy at his enthusiastic reception and proud of the fact that the whole affair, including the Banquet the next day, was in his honor.

The program then turned to one of its high-spots, the motion picture *Metropolis*. One of the true "old-timers" of science-fiction pictures, it had a very weak plot and thin philosophy as science fiction goes, it nevertheless proved very interesting and worthwhile.

After a thirty minute recess the Convention was again called to order. The most interesting part of the Convention, the public introduction of science fiction personalities, began.

John W. Campbell, Jr., was called upon and spoke on *Changing Science Fiction*.

Following him, Mort Weisinger gave a talk entitled *Men of Science Fiction*, relating many amusing and little known facts about SF personalities. Charles D. Hornig also spoke briefly.

Then came a surprise—or at least to us. We had presented our official letter of introduction—one given us by Ziff Davis shortly before we left Chicago, and although representing *AMAZING STORIES* and *Fantastic Adventures*, we hardly expected to be called upon to say a few words.

From then on, characters came fast and enthusiastically. Celebrities and world-famous characters in science fiction such as: the eminent German rocket authority Willy Ley, L. Sprague de Camp, L. A. Esbach, Manly Wade Wellman, Harl Vincent, Schneeman, Nelson S. Bond, shy and retiring Otto Binder, "world-saver" Edmond Hamilton, Ross Rocklynne, R. D. Swisher, Malcolm Jameson, John D. Clark, Ph.D., Isaac Asimov, John Victor Peterson, and many others.

But, the center of attraction was held by two of SF's most colorful fans, Forrest J. Ackerman and a vivacious lady-fan also from Los Angeles, whose adopted Esperanto name is Morojo. They came to the Convention dressed in ultra-modernistic clothing as witnessed in the movie "Things to Come" and created no little excitement when they were introduced to the eager crowd.

Ray Cummings, one of science fiction's old timers, put in an unexpected but warmly welcomed

appearance. For the third consecutive convention, Otis Adelbert Kline ducked out before he could be called upon to speak.

Mario Racio, also on the convention committee was presented, and later in the program SF fans met Leo Margulies, who was quoted in the write-up by *Time* as saying: "I am astonished. I didn't realize you boys could be so damn sincere!"

The evening session featured the auction of magazines, original drawings, SF items, fan mags, original manuscripts, etc., all donated by well-wishing editors, authors, artists and fans. Sam Moskowitz, James V. Taurasi, Mario Racio, Jr., and later just about anybody who wanted—auctioned off rare and unique items. Prominent bidders were Ackerman, Korshak, Ruppert, Reinsberg, and others. So concluded the first day of the Convention. Famous last words: Will Sykora to Sam Moskowitz (1:30 A. M. or later), "Sam, we gotta get them out'a here!"

July 3rd there was no morning session. At 2:00 PM a group of about sixty-five fans, plus numerous celebrities were called to order.

Ruroy Sibley, famed lecturer and astronomer was presented and accompanying an excellent movie on the universe, gave a very interesting talk.

After this enjoyable lecture was over, the Convention recessed briefly for more refreshments and then returned to the Hall for a combination science discussions and just plain talk session. The remaining auction items were quickly disposed of at bargain prices. That being the final session held in the Hall itself, the fans were shoosed out, the Hall cleaned up and vacated, pending the Science Fiction Dinner to be held at 8:30 PM that same evening. Once more the crowd sub-divided into those who were going to the Dinner, in honor of Frank R. Paul, and those who had planned their evening differently.

We attended the banquet. There were speeches—speeches by Paul, all decked in smiles, by Sykora, master of ceremony, Moskowitz, Ackerman, Hornig, Ley, Taurasi, in fact, by almost everyone there. When Reinsberg was called upon he made a Chicago bid for the next convention in 1940.

But all good things must end, and so did the Science Fiction Dinner, at 1:00 AM.

On July 4th, last day of the Convention, the SF baseball game got under way early in the afternoon out in Flushing, N. Y. It all ended with the team led by Moskowitz beating that led by Sykora 23 to about 13 (no one kept accurate count, to tell the truth!).

We still might remark humbly, that this hasn't, by any means, covered everything—that would require a book-length novel, but we have tried to recount something of the spirit, something of the sincerity and enthusiasm we shared and witnessed at this, the greatest of all Science Fiction Conventions, and in conclusion we'll simply say: "SEE YOU IN CHICAGO—1940!"

Mark Reinsberg & Erle Korshak.



The Priestess

By NELSON S. BOND

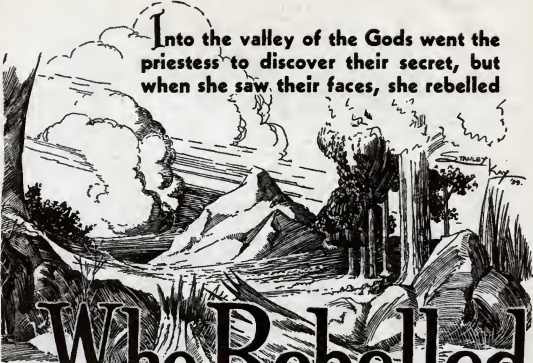
IN her twelfth summer, the illness came upon Meg and she was afraid. Afraid, yet turbulent with a strange feeling of exaltation unlike anything she had ever before known. She was a woman now. And she knew, suddenly and completely, that which was expected of her from this day on. Knew—and dreaded.

She went immediately to the *hoam* of the Mother. For such was the Law. But as she moved down the walk-avenue, she stared, with eyes newly curious, at the Men she passed. At their pale, pitifully hairless bodies. At their soft, futile hands and weak mouths. One lolling on the doorstep of 'Ana's

hoam, returned her gaze brazenly; made a small, enticing gesture. Meg shuddered, and curled her lips in a refusal-face.

Only yesterday she had been a child. Now, suddenly, she was a woman. And for the first time, Meg saw her people as they really were.

The warriors of the Clan. She looked with distaste upon the tense angularity of their bodies. The corded legs, the grim, set jaws. The cold eyes. The brawny arms, scarred to the elbow with ill-healed cicatrices. The tiny, thwarted breasts, flat and hard beneath leather harness-plates. Fighters they were, and nothing else.



Into the valley of the Gods went the priestess to discover their secret, but when she saw their faces, she rebelled

Who Rebelled

This was not what she wanted.

She saw, too, the mothers. The full-lipped, flabby breasted bearers of children, whose skins were soft and white as those of the Men. Whose eyes were humid; washed barren of all expression by desires too oft aroused, too often sated. Their bodies bulged at hip and thigh, swayed when they walked like ripe grain billowing in a lush and fertile field. They lived only that the tribe might live, might continue to exist. They reproduced.

This was not what she wanted.

Then there were the workers. Their bodies retained a vestige of woman-kind's inherent grace and nobility. But if their waists were thin, their hands were blunt-fingered and thick. Their shoulders were bent with the weight of labor; coarsened from adze and hod.

Their faces were grim from the eternal struggle with an unyielding earth. And the earth, of which they had made themselves a part, had in return made itself a part of them. The workers' skin was browned with soil, their bodies stank of dirt and grime and unwashed perspiration.

No, none of these was what she wanted. None of these was what she would *have*, of that she was positively determined.

So great was Meg's concentration that she entered into the *hoam* of the Mother without crying out, as was required. Thus it was that she discovered the Mother making great magic to the gods.

In her right hand, the Mother held a stick. With it she scratched upon a smooth, bleached, calfskin scroll. From

time to time she let the stick drink from a pool of midnight cupped in a dish before her. When she moved it again on the hide, it left its spoor; a spidery trail of black.

For a long moment Meg stood and watched, wondering. Then dread overcame her; fear-thoughts shook her body. She thought suddenly of the gods. Of austere Jarg, their leader; of lean Ibrim and taciturn Taamuz. Of far-seeing Tedhi, she whose laughter echoes in the roaring summer thunders. What wrath would they visit upon one who had spied into their secrets?

She covered her eyes and dropped to her knees. But there were footsteps before her, and the Mother's hands upon her shoulders. And there was but gentle chiding in the voice of the Mother as she said, "My child, know you not the Law? That all must cry out before entering the Mother's *hoam*?"

Meg's fear-thoughts went away. The Mother was good. It was she who fed and clothed the Clan; warmed them in dark winter and found them meat when meat was scarce. If she, who was the gods' spokesman on earth, saw no evil in Meg's unintentional prying—

Meg dared look again at the magic stick. There was a question in her eyes. The Mother answered that question.

"It is 'writing,' Meg. Speech without words."

Speech-without-words? Meg crept to the table; bent a curious ear over the spider-marks. But she heard no sound. Then the Mother was beside her again, saying, "No, my child. It does not speak to the ears, but to the eyes. Listen, and I will make it speak through my mouth."

She read aloud.

"Report of the month of June, 3478 A. D. There has been no change in the number of the Jinnia Clan. We are still five score and seven, with nineteen Men,

twelve cattle, thirty horses. But there is reason to believe that 'Ana and Sahlee will soon add to our number.

"Last week Darthee, Lina and Alis journeyed into the Clina territory in search of game. They met there several of the Durm Clan and exchanged gifts of salt and bacca. Pledges of friendship were given. On the return trip, Darthee was linberred by one of the Wild Ones, but was rescued by her companions before the strain could be crossed. The Wild One was destroyed.

"We have in our village a visitor from the Delwurs of the east, who says that in her territory the Wild Ones have almost disappeared. Illness, she says, has depleted their Men—and she begs that I lend her one or two for a few months. I am thinking of letting her have Jak and Ralf, both of whom are proven studs—"

The Mother stopped. "That is as far as I had gone, my child, when you entered."

MEG'S eyes were wide with wonder.

It was quite true that Darthee, Lina and Alis had recently returned from a trip to Clina. And that there was now a visitor in camp. But how could the speech-without-words know these things, *tell* these things? She said, "But, Mother—will not the speech-without-words forget?"

"No, Meg. *We* forget. The books remember always."

"Books, Mother?"

"These are books." The Mother moved to the sleeping part of her *hoam*; selected one of a tumbled pile of calfskin scrolls. "Here are the records of our Clan from ages past—since the time of the Ancient Ones. Not all are here. Some have been lost. Others were ruined by flood or destroyed by fire.

"But it is the Mother's duty to keep

these records. That is why the Mother must know the art of making the speech-without-words. It is hard work, my little one. And a labor without end—"

Meg's eyes were shining. The trouble that had been cold within her before was vanished now. In its place had come a great thought. A thought *so* great, *so* daring, that Meg had to open her lips twice before the words came.

"Is it—" she asked breathlessly, "Is it very hard to become a—a Mother?"

The Mother smiled gently. "A very great task, Meg. But you should not think of such things. It is not yet time for you to decide—" She paused, looking at Meg strangely. "Or—is it, my child?"

Meg flushed, and her eyes dropped.

"It is, Mother."

"Then be not afraid, my daughter. You know the Law. At this important hour it is yours to decide what station in life will be yours. What is your wish, Meg? Would you be a warrior, a worker, or a breeding mother?"

Meg looked at the Clan leader boldly.

"I would be," she said, "a Mother!" Then, swiftly, "But not a breeding mother. I mean a *Clan* Mother—like you, O Mother!"

The Mother stared. Then the harsh lines melted from her face and she said, thoughtfully, "Thrice before has that request been made of me, Meg. Each time I have refused. It was Beth who asked first, oh, many years ago. She became a warrior, and died gallantly lifting the siege of Loovil. . . .

"Then Haizl. And the last time it was Heln. When I refused, she became the other type of mother.

"But I was younger then. Now I am old. And it is right that there should be someone to take my place when I am gone—" She stared at the girl intently.

"It is not easy, my daughter. There is much work to be done. Work, not of the body but of the mind. There are problems to be solved, many vows to be taken, a hard pilgrimage to be made—"

"All these," swore Meg, "would I gladly do, O Mother! If you will but let me—" Her voice broke suddenly. "But I cannot become anything else. I would not be a warrior, harsh and bitter. Nor a worker, black with dirt. And the breeders—I would as soon mate with one of the Wild Ones as with one of the Men! The thought of their soft hands—"

She shuddered. And the Clan Mother nodded, understanding. "Very well, Meg. Tomorrow you will move into this *hoam*. You will live with me and study to become the Jinnia Clan's next Mother. . . ."

SO began Meg's training. Nor was the Mother wrong in saying that the task was not an easy one. Many were the times when Meg wept bitterly, striving to learn that which a Mother must know. There was the speech-without-words, which Meg learned to call "writing." It looked like a simple magic when the Mother did it. But that slender stick, which moved so fluidly beneath the Mother's aged fingers, slipped and skidded and made ugly blotches of midnight on the hide whenever Meg tried to make spider-marks.

Meg learned that these wavering lines were not meaningless. Each line was made of "sentences," each sentence of "words," and each word was composed of "letters." And each letter made a sound, just as each combination of letters made a word-sound.

These were strange and confusing. A single letter, out of place, changed the whole meaning of the word oftentimes. Sometimes it altered the meaning of the whole sentence. But Meg's determina-

tion was great. There came, finally, the day when the Mother allowed her to write the monthly report in the Clan history. Meg was thirteen, then. But already she was older in wisdom than the others of her Clan.

It was then that the Mother began to teach her yet another magic. It was the magic of "numbers." Where there had been twenty-six "letters," there were only ten numbers. But theirs was a most peculiar magic. Put together, oftentimes they formed other and greater numbers. Yet the same numbers taken away from each other formed still a third group. The names of these magics, Meg never did quite learn. They were strange, magical, meaningless terms. "Multiplication" and "subtraction." But she learned how to do them.

Her task was made the harder, for it was about this time that the Evil Ones sent a little pain-imp to torment her. He stole in through her ear one night while she was sleeping. And for many months he lurked in her head, above her eyes. Every time she would sit down to study the magic of the numbers, he would begin dancing up and down, trying to stop her. But Meg persisted. And finally the pain-imp either died or was removed. And Meg knew the numbers. . . .

There were rites and rituals to be learned. There was the Sacred Song which had to be learned by heart. This song had no tune, but was accompanied by the beating of the tribal drums. Its words were strange and terrible; echoing the majesty of the gods in its cryptic phrasing.

"O, Sakan! you see by Tedhi on his early Light—"

This was a great song. A powerful magic. It was the only tribal song Meg learned which dared name one of the gods. And it had to be sung reverently, lest far-seeing Tedhi be displeased and

show her monstrous teeth and destroy the invoker with her mirthful thunders.

Meg learned, too, the tribal song of the Jinnia Clan. She had known it from infancy, but its words had been obscure. Now she learned enough to probe into its meaning. She did not know the meanings of some of the forgotten words, but for the most part it made sense when the tribe gathered on festive nights to sing, "Caamé back to over Jinnia—"

And Meg grew in age and stature and wisdom. In her sixteenth summer, her legs were long and firm and straight as a warrior's spear. Her body was supple; bronzed by sunlight save where her doeskin breech-cloth kept the skin white. Unbound, her hair would have trailed the earth, but she wore it piled upon her head, fastened by a netting woven by the old mothers, too ancient to bear.

The vanity-god had died long ages since, and Meg had no way of knowing she was beautiful. But sometimes, looking at her reflection in the pool as she bathed, she approved the soft curves of her slim young body, and was more than ever glad and proud that she had become a neophyte to the Mother. She liked her body to be this way. Why, she did not know. But she was glad that she had not turned lean and hard, as had those of her age who had become warriors. Or coarse, as had become the workers. Or soft and flabby, as were the breeding-mothers. Her skin was golden-brown, and pure gold where the sunlight burnished the fine down on her arms and legs; between her high, firm breasts.

And finally there came the day when the Mother let Meg conduct the rites at the Feast of the Blossoms. This was in July, and Meg had then entered upon her seventeenth year. It was a great occasion, and a great test. But Meg

did not fail. She conducted the elaborate rite from beginning to end without a single mistake.

THAT night, in the quiet of their *hoam*, the Mother made a final magic. She drew from her collection of aged trophies a curl of parchment. This she blessed. Then she handed it to Meg.

"You are ready now, O my daughter," she said. "In the morning you will leave."

"Leave, Mother?" said Meg.

"For the final test. This that I give you is a map. A shower-of-places. You will see, here at this joining of mountain and river, our village in the heart of the Jinnia territory. Far off, westward and to the north, as here is shown, is the Place of the Gods. It is there you must go on pilgrimage before you return to take your place as Mother."

Now, at this last moment, Meg felt misgivings.

"But you, Mother?" she asked. "If I become Mother, what will become of you?"

"The rest will be welcome, daughter. It is good to know that the work will be carried on—" The aged Mother pondered. "There is much, yet, that you do not know, Meg. It is forbidden that I should tell you all until you have been to the Place of the Gods. There will you see, and understand—"

"The—the books?" faltered Meg.

"Upon your return you may read the books. Even as I read them when I returned. And all will be made clear to you. Even that final secret which the clan must not know—"

"I do not understand, Mother."

"You will, my daughter—later. And now, to sleep. For at dawn tomorrow begins your pilgrimage. . . ."

OFF in the hills, a wild dog howled his melancholy farewell to the dy-

ing moon. His thin song clove the stirring silence of the trees, the incessant movement of the forest. Meg wakened at that cry; wakened and saw that already the red edge of dawn tinged the eastern sky.

She uncurled from the broad tree-crotch in which she had spent the night. Her horse was already awake, and with restless movements was nibbling the sparse grass beneath the giant oak. Meg loosed his tether, then went to the spring she had found the night before.

There she drank, and in the little rill that trickled from the spring, bathed herself as best she could. Her ablutions finished, she set about making breakfast. There was not much food in her saddlebags. A side of rabbit, carefully saved from last night's dinner. Two biscuits, slightly dry now. A precious handful of salt. She ate sparingly, resolved to build camp early tonight in order to set a few game traps and bake another batch of biscuit.

She cleared a space, scratching a wide circle of earth bare of all leaves and twigs, then walking around it widershins thrice to chase away the fire-demon. Then she scratched the fire-stone against a piece of the black metal from the town of the Ancient Ones—a gift of the Mother—and kindled her little fire.

Two weeks had passed since Meg had left the Jinnia territory. She had come from the rugged mountainlands of her home territory, through the river valleys of the Hyan Clan. On the flat plains of the Yana section, she had made an error. Her map had shown the route clearly, but she had come upon a road built by the Ancient Ones. A road of white creet, still in fair repair. And because it was easier to travel on this highway than to thread a way through the jungle, she had let herself drift southward.

It was not until she reached the time-worn village of Slooie that friendly Zurries had pointed out her mistake. Then she had had to turn northward and westward again, going up the Big River to the territory of the Demoys.

Now, her map showed, she was in Braska territory. Two more weeks—perhaps less than that—should bring her to her goal. To the sacred Place of the Gods.

Meg started and roused from her speculations as a twig snapped in the forest behind her. In one swift motion she had wheeled, drawn her sword, and was facing the spot from which the sound had come. But the green bushes did not tremble; no further crackling came from the underbrush. Her fears allayed, she turned to the important

the ruined villages of the Ancient Ones—most of all for mates. The Wild Ones were dying out, slowly, because of their lack of mates. There were few females left among them. Most of the Wild Ones were male. But there was little in their shaggy bodies, their thick, brutish faces, their hard, gnarled muscles, to remind one of the Men.

A Wild One had attacked Meg in her second night's camp. Fortunately she had not yet been asleep when he made his foray—else her pilgrimage would have ended abruptly. Not that he would have killed her. The Wild Ones did not kill the Women they captured.



Meg lay unconscious while the Man battled with the Wild One.

business of roasting her side of rabbit.

It was always needful to be on the alert. Meg had learned that lesson early; even before her second day's journey had led her out of Jinnia territory. For, as the Mother had warned, there were still many Wild Ones roaming through the land. Searching for food, for the precious fire-metal from

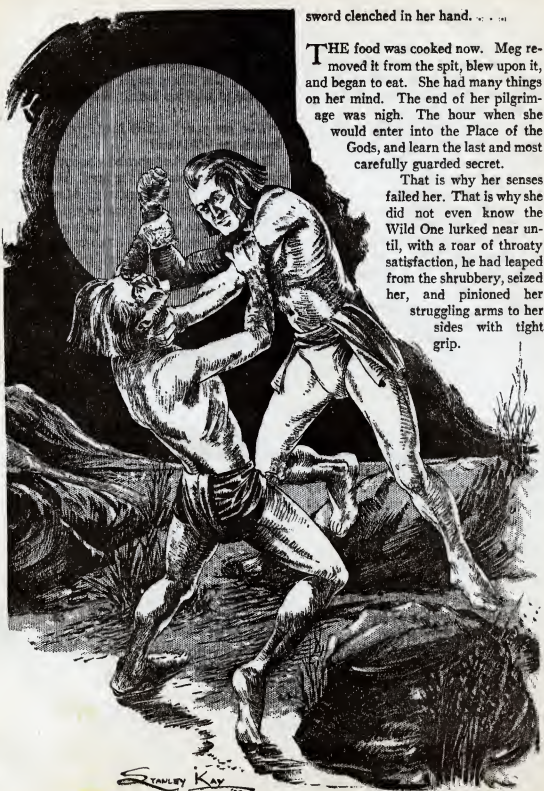
They took them to their dens. And—Meg had heard tales. A priestess could not cross her strain with a Wild One and still become a Mother.

So Meg had fought fiercely, and had been victorious. The Wild One's bones lay now in the Jinnia hills, picked bare by the vultures. But since that escape, Meg had slept nightly in trees, her

sword clenched in her hand.

THE food was cooked now. Meg removed it from the spit, blew upon it, and began to eat. She had many things on her mind. The end of her pilgrimage was nigh. The hour when she would enter into the Place of the Gods, and learn the last and most carefully guarded secret.

That is why her senses failed her. That is why she did not even know the Wild One lurked near until, with a roar of throaty satisfaction, he had leaped from the shrubbery, seized her, and pinioned her struggling arms to her sides with tight grip.



STANLEY KAY
39.

It was a bitter fight, but a silent one. For all her slimness, Meg's body was sturdy. She fought pantherlike; using every weapon with which the gods had endowed her. Her fists, legs, teeth.

But the Wild One's strength was as great as his ardor was strong. He crushed Meg to him bruisingly; the stink of his sweat burning her nostrils. His arms bruised her breasts; choked the breath from her straining lungs. One furry arm tensed about her throat, cutting off the precious air.

Meg writhed, broke free momentarily, buried her strong teeth in his arm. A howl of hurt and rage broke from the Wild One's lips. Meg tugged at her sword. But again the Wild One threw himself upon her; this time with great fists flailing. Meg saw a hammerlike hand smashing down upon her, felt the shocking concussion of the Wild One's strength. A lightning flashed. The ground leaped up to meet her. Then all was silent. . . .

SHE woke, groaning weakly. Her head was splitting, and the bones of her body ached. She started to struggle to her feet; had risen halfway before she discovered with a burst of hope that she *could* move! She was not bound! Then the Wild One—

She glanced about her swiftly. She was still lying in the little glade where she had been attacked. The sun's full orb had crept over the horizon now, threading a lacework of light through the tiny glen. Her fire smouldered still. And beside it crouched a—a—

Meg could not decide what it was. It looked like a Man, but that of course was impossible. Its body was smooth and almost as hairless as her own. Bronzed by the sun. But it was not the pale, soft body of a man. It was muscular, hard, firm; taller and stronger than a warrior.

Flight was Meg's first thought. But her curiosity was even stronger than her fear. This was a mystery. And her sword was beside her. Whoever, or whatever, this Thing might be, it did not seem to wish her harm. She spoke to it.

"Who are you?" asked Meg. "And where is the Wild One?"

The stranger looked up, and a happy-looking spread over his even features. He pointed briefly to the shrubbery. Meg followed the gesture; saw lying there the dead body of the Wild One. Her puzzled gaze returned to the Man-thing.

"You killed him? Then you are not one of the Wild Ones? But I do not understand. You are not a man—"

"You," said the man-thing in a voice deeper than Meg had ever heard from a human throat, "talk too much. Sit down and eat, Woman!"

He tossed Meg a piece of her own rabbit-meat. Self unaware that she did so, Meg took it and began eating. She stared at the stranger as he finished his own repast, wiped his hands on his clout and moved toward her. Meg dropped her half-eaten breakfast, rose hastily and groped for her sword.

"Touch me not, Hairless One!" she cried warningly. "I am a priestess of the Jinnia Clan. It is not for such as you to—"

The stranger brushed by her without even deigning to hear her words. He reached the spot where her horse had been tethered; shook a section of broken rein ruefully.

"You women!" he spat. "Bah! You do not know how to train a horse. See—he ran away!"

Meg thought anger-thoughts. Her face burned with the sun, though the sun's rays were dim in the glade. She cried, "Man-thing, know you no better than to talk thus to a Woman and a master? By Jarg, I should have you

whipped—"

"You talk too much!" repeated the Man-thing wearily. Once more he squatted on his hunkers; studied her thoughtfully. "But you interest me. Who are you? What are you doing so far from the Jinnia territory? Where are you going?"

"A priestess," said Meg coldly, "does not answer the questions of a Man-thing—"

"I'm not a Man-thing," said the stranger pettishly, "I am a Man. A Man of the Kirki tribe which lives many miles south of here. I am Daiv, known as He-who-would-learn. So tell me, Woman."

His candor confused Meg. Despite herself, she found the words leaving her lips. "I—I am Meg. I am making pilgrimage to the Place of the Gods. It is my final task ere I become Mother of my clan."

The Man's eyes appraised her with embarrassing frankness. "So?" he said. "Mother of a Clan? Meg, would you not rather stay with me and become mother of your own clan?"

Meg gasped. Men were the mates of Women—yes! But never had any Man had the audacity to *suggest* such a thing. Matings were arranged by the Mother, with the agreement of the Woman. And surely this Man must know that priestesses did not mate.

"Man!" she cried, "Know you not the Law? I am soon to become a Clan Mother. Guard your words, or the wrath of the Gods—"

The Man, Daiv, made happy-sounds again. "It was I who saved you from the Wild One," he chuckled. "Not the Gods. In my land, Golden One, we think it does no harm to ask. But if you are unwilling—" he shrugged. "I will leave you now."

Without further adieu, he rose and started to leave. Meg's face reddened.

She cried out, angrily, "Man!"

He turned. "Yes?"

"I have no horse. How am I to get to the Place of the Gods?"

"Afoot, Golden One. Or are you Women too weak to make such a journey?"

He laughed again—and was gone.

FOR a long moment Meg stared after him, watching the green fronds close behind his disappearing form, feeling the stark desolation of utter aloneness close in upon her and envelope her. Then she did a thing she herself could not understand. She put down her foot upon the ground, hard, in an angry-movement.

The sun was high, and growing warmer. The journey to the Place of the Gods was longer, now that she had no mount. But the pilgrimage was a sacred obligation. Meg scraped dirt over the smoldering embers of her fire. She tossed her saddle-bags across her shoulder and faced westward. And she pressed on. . . .

The way was long; the day hot and tedious. Before the sun rode overhead, Meg was sticky with sweat and dust. Her feet were sore, and her limbs ached with the unaccustomed exercise of walking. By afternoon, every step was an agony. And while the sun was still too-strong-to-be-looked-at, she found a small spring of fresh water and decided to make camp there for the night.

She set out two seines for small game; took the flour and salt from her saddle-bags and set about making a batch of biscuit. As the rocks heated, she went to the stream and put her feet in it, letting the water-god lick the fever from her tender soles.

From where she sat, she could not see the fire. She had been there perhaps a half an hour when a strange, unfamiliar smell wrinkled her nostrils. It

was at once a sweet-and-bitter smell; a pungent odor like strong herbs, but one that set the water to running in her mouth.

She went back to her camp hastily—and found there the Man, Daiv, once again crouching over her stone fireplace. He was watching a pot on the stones. From time to time he stirred the pot with a long stick. Drawing closer, Meg saw a brown water in the pot. It was this which made the aromatic smell. She would have called out to the Man, but he saw her first. And,

"Hello, Golden One!" he said.

Meg said stonily, "What are you doing here?"

The Man shrugged.

"I am Daiv. He-who-would-learn. I got to thinking about this Place of the Gods, and decided I too, would come and see it." He sniffed the brown, bubbling liquid; seemed satisfied. He poured some of it out into an earthen bowl and handed it to Meg. "You want some?"

Meg moved toward him cautiously. This might be a ruse of the Man from the Kirki tribe. Perhaps this strange, aromatic liquid was a drug. The Mother of her Clan had the secret of such drinks. There was one which caused the head to pucker, the mouth to dry and the feet to reel. . . .

"What is it?" she demanded suspiciously.

"Cawfi, of course." Daiv looked surprised. "Don't you know? But, no—I suppose the bean-tree would not grow in your cold northern climate. It grows near my land. In Sippe and Weezian territories. Drink it!"

MEG tasted the stuff. It was like its smell; strong and bitter, but strangely pleasing. Its heat coursed through her, taking the tired-pain from her body as the water of the spring had

taken the burn from her feet.

"It's good, Man," she said.

"Daiv," said the Man. "My name is Daiv, Golden One."

Meg made a stern-look with her brows.

"It is not fitting," she said, "that a priestess should call a Man by his name."

Daiv seemed to be given to making happy-sounds. He made one again.

"You have done lots of things today that are not fitting for a priestess, Golden One. You are not in Jinnia now. Things are different here. And as for me—" He shrugged. "My people do things differently, too. We are one of the chosen tribes, you know. We come from the land of the Escape."

"The Escape?" asked Meg.

"Yes." As he talked, Daiv busied himself. He had taken meat from his pouch, and was wrapping this now in clay. He tossed the caked lumps into the embers of the crude oven. He had also some taters, which Meg had not tasted for many weeks. He took the skins off these, cut them into slices with his hunting-knife and browned the pieces on a piece of hot, flat rock. "The Escape of the Ancient Ones, you know."

"I—I'm not sure I understand," said Meg.

"Neither do I—quite. It happened many years ago. Before my father's father's father's people. There are books in the tribe Master's *haom* which tell. I have seen some of them. . . .

"Once things were different, you know. In the days of the Ancient Ones, Men and Women were equal throughout the world. In fact, the Men were the Masters. But the Men were warlike and fierce—"

"Like the Wild Ones, you mean?"

"Yes. But they did not make war with clubs and spears, like the Wild Ones. They made war with great cata-

pults that threw fire and flame and exploding death. With little bows that shot steel arrowheads. With gases that destroy, and waters that burn the skin.

"On earth and sea they made these battles, and even in the air. For in those days, the Ancient Ones had wings, like birds. They soared high, making great thunders. And when they warred, they dropped huge eggs of fire which killed others."

Meg cried sharply, "Oh—"

"Don't you believe me?"

"The taters, Daiv! They're burning!"

"Oh!" Daiv made a happy-face and carefully turned the scorching tater slices. Then he continued.

"It is told that there came a final greatest war of all. It was a conflict not only between the Clans, but between the forces of the entire earth. It started in the year which is known as nineteen and sixty—whatever *that* means—"

"I know!" said Meg.

Daiv looked at her with sudden respect. "You do? Then the Master of my tribe must meet you and—"

"It is impossible," said Meg. "Go on!"

"Very well. For many years this war lasted. But neither side could gain a victory. In those days it was the Men who fought, while the Women remained *hoam* to keep the Men's houses. But the Men died by the thousands. And there came a day when the Women grew tired of it.

"They got together . . . all of them who lived in the civilized places. And they decided to rid themselves of the brutal Men. They stopped sending supplies and fire-eggs to the battling Men across the sea. They built walled forts, and hid themselves in them.

"The war ended when the Men found they had no more to fight with. They came back to their *hoams*, seeking their

Women. But the Women would not receive them. There was bitter warfare once again—between the sexes. But the Women held their walled cities. And so—"

"Yes?" said Meg.

"The Men," said Daiv somberly, "became the Wild Ones of the forest. Mateless, save for the few Women they could linber.* Their numbers died off. The Clans grew. Only in a few places—like Kirki, my land—did humanity not become a matriarchy."

He looked at Meg. "You believe?"

Meg shook her head. Suddenly she felt very sorry for this stranger, Daiv. She knew, now, why he had not harmed her. Why, when she had been powerless before him, he had not forced her to become his mate. He was mad. Totally and completely mad. She said, gently, "Shall we eat, Daiv?"

MAD or not, there was great pleasure in having some company on the long, weary, remaining marches of her pilgrimage. Thus it was that Meg made no effort to discourage Daiv in his desire to accompany her. He was harmless, and he was pleasant company—for a Man. And his talk, wild as it was at times, served to pass boring hours.

They crossed the Braska territory and entered at last into the 'Kota country. It was here the Place of the Gods was—only at the far western end, near Yomin. And the slow days passed, turning into weeks. Not many miles did they cover in those first few days, while Meg's feet were tender and her limbs full of jumping little pain-imps. But when hard walking had destroyed the pain-imps, they traveled faster. And the time was drawing near. . . .

"YOU started, once, to tell me about the Escape, Daiv," said Meg one

*Linber—to kidnap, (derived from Lindbergh?)—Ed.

evening. "But you did not finish. What is the legend of the Escape?"

Daiv sprawled languidly before the fire. His eyes were dreamy.

"It happened in the Zoni territory," he said, "Not far from the lands of my own tribe. In those days was there a Man-god named Renn, who foresaw the death of the Ancient Ones. He built a gigantic sky-bird of metal, and into its bowels climbed two score Men and Women.

"They flew away, off there—" Daiv pointed to a shining white dot in the sky above. "To the evening star. But it is said that one day they will return. That is why our tribe tries to preserve the customs of the Ancient Ones. Why even misguided tribes like yours preserve the records—"

Meg's face reddened.

"Enough!" she cried. "I have listened to many of your tales without making comment, Daiv. But now I command you to tell me no more such tales as this. This is—this is blasphemy!"

"Blasphemy?"

"Is it not bad enough that your deranged mind should tell of days when *Men* ruled the earth? Now you speak of a *Man-god*!"

Daiv looked worried. He said, "But, Golden One, I thought you understood that all the gods were Men—"

"Daiv!" Without knowing why she did so, Meg suddenly swung to face him; covered his lips with her hands. She sought the darkness fearfully; made a swift gesture and a swifter prayer. "Do not tempt the wrath of the Gods! I am a priestess, and I know. All the Gods are—*must* be—Women!"

"But why?"

"Why—why, because they are!" said Meg. "It could not be otherwise. All Women know the gods are great, good and strong. How, then, could they be

men? Jarg, and Ibrim, and Taamuz. The mighty Tedhi—"

Daiv's eyes narrowed in wonder-thought.

"I do not know their names," he mused. "They are not gods of our tribe. And yet—Ibrim . . . Tedhi. . ."

There was vast pity in Meg's voice.

"We have been comrades for a long journey, Daiv," she pleaded. "Never before, since the world began, have a Man and a Woman met as you and I. Often you have said mad, impossible things. But I have forgiven you because—well, because you are, after all, only a Man.

"But tomorrow, or the day after that, we should come to the Place of the Gods. Then will my pilgrimage be ended, and I will learn that which is the ultimate secret. Then I shall have to return to my Clan, to become the Mother. And so let us not spoil our last hours of comradeship with vain argument."

Daiv sighed.

"The elder ones are gone, and their legends tell so little. It may be you are right, Golden One. But I have a feeling that it is my tribal lore that does not err. Meg—I asked this once before. Now I ask again. Will you become my mate?"

"It is impossible, Daiv. Priestesses and Mothers do not mate. And soon I will be a Mother. But—" Meg's voice was gentle. "I will take you back with me to Jinnia, if you wish. And I will see to it that you are taken care of, always, as a Man should be taken care of."

Daiv shook his head.

"I cannot, Meg. Our ways are not the same. There is a custom in our tribe . . . a mating custom which you do not know. Let me show you—"

He leaned over swiftly. Meg felt the mighty strength of his bronzed arms closing about her, drawing her close. And he was touching his mouth to hers;

closely, brutally, terrifyingly.

She struggled and tried to cry out, but his mouth bruised hers. Anger-thoughts swept through her like a flame. But it was not anger—it was something else—that gave life to that flame. Suddenly her veins were running with liquid fire. Her heart beat upon rising, panting breasts like something captive that would be free. Her fists beat upon his shoulders vainly . . . but there was little strength in her blows.

Then he released her, and she fell back, exhausted. Her eyes glowed with anger and her voice was husky in her throat. She tried to speak, and could not. And in that moment, a vast and terrible weakness trembled through Meg. She knew, fearfully, that if Daiv sought to mate with her, not all the priestessdom of the gods could save her. There was a body-hunger throbbing within her that hated his Manness . . . but cried for it!

But Daiv, too, had stepped back. And his voice was low as he said, "Meg?"

She wiped her mouth with the back of her hand. Her voice was vibrant.

"What magic is that, Daiv? What custom is that? I hate it. I hate *you*! I—"

"It is the touching-of-mouths, Golden One. It is the right of the Man with his mate. It is my plea that you enter not the Place of the Gods, but return with me, now, to Kirki, there to become my mate."

For a moment, indecision swayed Meg. But then, slowly, "No! I must go to the Place of the Gods," she said.

AND thus it was. For the next day Meg marked on the shower-of-places the last line that indicated the path of her pilgrimage. And at eventide, when the sun threw long, ruddy rays upon the rounded hills of black, she and Daiv entered into the gateway

which she had been told led to the Place of the Gods.

It was here they lingered for a moment. There were many words each would have said to the other. But both knew that this was the end.

"I know no Law, Daiv," said Meg, "which forbids a Man from entering the Place of the Gods. So you may do so if you wish. But it is not fitting that we should enter together. Therefore I ask you to wait here while I enter alone.

"I will learn the secret there. And learning, I will go out by another path, and return to Jinnia."

"You will go—alone?"

"Yes, Daiv."

Daiv nodded.

"It is yours to decide, O Golden One. But—should you change your mind—"

"I will not, Daiv."

"But if you should—" he persisted.

"If by some strangeness I should change my mind," said Meg, "I will return to you—here. But it is unlikely. Therefore do not wait."

"I will wait, Golden One," said Daiv soberly, "until all hope is dead."

Meg turned away, then hesitated and turned back. A great sorrow was within her. She did not know why. But she knew of one magic that could heal her heart for the time.

"Daiv—" she whispered.

"Yes, Golden One?"

"No one will ever know. And before I leave you forever—could we once more do the—the touching-of-mouths?"

SO it was that alone and with the recollection of a moment of stirring glory in her heart, Meg strode proudly at last into the Place of the Gods.

It was a wild and desolate place. Barren hills of sand rose about here, and of vegetation there was none save sparse weeds and scrubby stumps that flowered miserly in the bleak, chill air.

The ground was harsh and salt beneath her feet, and no birds sang an evening carillon in that drab wilderness. Afar, a wild dog pierced the sky with its lonely call. The great hills echoed that cry dismally.

Above the other hills towered a greater one. To this, with unerring footsteps, Meg took her way. She knew not what to expect. It might be that here a band of singing virgins would appear to her, guiding her to a secret altar before which she would kneel and learn the last mystery.

It might be that the gods themselves reigned here, and that she would fall in awe before the sweeping skirts of austere Jarg, to hear from the gods' own lips the secret she had come so far to learn.

Whatever it was that would be revealed to her, Meg was ready. Others had found this place, and had survived. She did not fear death. But—death-in-life? Coming to the Place of the Gods with a blasphemy in her heart? With the memory of a Man's mouth upon hers—

For a moment, Meg was afraid. She had betrayed her priestessdom. Her body was inviolate, but would not the gods search her soul and know that her heart had forgotten the Law; had mated with a Man?

But if death must be her lot—so be it. She pressed on. . . .

So Meg turned through a winding path, down between two tortuous clefts of rock, and came at last unto the Place of the Gods. Nor could she have chosen a better moment for the ultimate reaching of this place. The sun's roundness had now touched the western horizon.

There was still light. And Meg's eyes, wondering, sought that light. Sought—and saw! And then, with awe in her heart, Meg fell to her knees.

She had glimpsed that-which-was-

not-to-be-seen! The Gods themselves, standing in omnipotent majesty, upon the crest of the towering rock.

FOR tremulous moments Meg knelt there, whispering the ritual prayers of appeasement. At any moment she expected to hear the thunderous voice of Tedhi, or to feel upon her shoulder the judicial hand of Jarg. But there came no sound but the frenzied beating of her own heart, of the soft stirring of dull grasses, of the wind touching the grim rocks.

And she lifted her head and looked once more. . . .

It was they! A race-recollection, deeper and more sure than her own halting memory told her at once that she had not erred. This was, indeed, the Place of the Gods. And these were the Gods she faced—stern, implacable, everlasting. Carven in eternal rock by the hands of those of long ago.

Here they were; the Great Four. Jarg and Taamuz, with ringletted curls framing their stern, judicial faces. Sad Ibrim, lean of cheek and hollow of eye. And far-seeing-Tedhi, whose eyes were concealed behind the giant telescopes. Whose lips, even now, were peeled back as though to loose a peal of his thunderous laughter.

And the Secret?

But even as the question leaped to her mind, it had its answer. Suddenly Meg knew that there was no visitation to be made upon her here. There would be no circle of singing virgins, no communication from those great stone lips. For the Secret which the Mother had hinted . . . the Secret which the Clanswomen must not know . . . was a secret Daiv had confided to her during those long marches of the pilgrimage.

The Gods—were Men!

Oh, not men like Jak and Ralf, whose pale bodies were but the instruments

through which the breeding mothers' bodies were fertilized! Nor male creatures like the Wild Ones. But—Men like Daiv! Lean and hard of jaw, strong of muscle, sturdy of body.

Even the curls could not conceal the inherent masculinity of Jarg and Taamuz. And Tedhi's lip was covered with Man-hair, clearcut and bristling above his happy-mouth. And Ibrim's cheeks were haired, even as Daiv's had been from time to time before he made his tribal cut-magic with a keen knife.

The gods, the rulers, the Masters of the Ancient Ones *had* been Men. It had been as Daiv said—that many ages ago the Women had rebelled. And now they pursued their cold and loveless courses, save where—in a few places like the land of Kirki—the old way still maintained.

It was a great knowledge, and a bitter one. Now Meg understood why the Mother's lot was so unhappy. Because only the Mother knew how artificial this new life was. How soon the Wild Ones would die out, and the captive Men along with them. When that day came, there would be no more young. No more Men *or* Women. No more civilization. . . .

The Gods knew this. That is why they stood here in the grey hills of 'Kota, sad, forlorn, forgotten. The dying gods of a dying race. That because of an ill-conceived vengeance humankind was slowly destroying itself.

There was no hope. Knowing, now, this Secret, Meg must return to her Clan with lips sealed. There, like the Mother before her, she must watch with haunted eyes the slow dwindling of their tiny number . . . see the weak and futile remnants of Man die off. Until, at last—

THEN, like the glory of the newborn moon, understanding came to Meg!

Hope was not dead! The Mother had been wrong. For the Mother had not been so fortunate in her pilgrimage as had Meg. She had never learned that there were still places in the world where Man had preserved himself in the image of the Ancient Ones. In the image of the Gods.

But she, Meg, knew! And knowing, she was presented with the greatest choice a Woman could know.

Forward, into the valley, lay the path through which she could return to her Clan. There she would become Mother, and would guide and guard her people through a lifetime. She would be all-wise, all-powerful, all-important. But she would be virgin unto death; sterile with the sanctity of tradition.

This she might do. But there was yet another way. And Meg threw her arms high, crying out that the Gods might hear and decide her problem.

The Gods spoke not. Their solemn features, weighted with the gravity of time, moved not nor spoke to her. But as she searched their faces piteously for an answer to her vast despair, there came to Meg a memory. It was a passage from the Prayer of Ibrim. And as her lips framed those remembered words, it seemed that the dying rays of the sun centered on Ibrim's weary face, and those great, stone eyes were alive for a moment with understanding . . . and approval. . . .

“ . . . shall not perish from the earth, but have everlasting Life. . . . ”

Then Meg, the priestess, decided. With a sharp cry that broke from her heart, she turned and ran. Not toward the valley. But back . . . back . . . back . . . on feet that were suddenly stumbling and eager. Back through the towering shadow of Mt. Rushmore, through a desolate grotto that led to a gateway wherein awaited the Man who had taught her the touching-of-mouths.

JUDSON'S ANNIHILATOR

BY
JOHN BEYNON

CHAPTER I

A Demonstration

MAJOR-GENERAL STALHAM finished the kidneys and bacon and got down to the toast and marmalade. His nephew watched him patiently from the other side of the table.

"More coffee, Uncle?" he suggested.

The Major-General hauled in his faculties from a long distance.

"Er—yes, thank you. Wish I could get coffee like this at home. No good. I've tried. No idea." He drank and lapsed into silence again until the meal was finished. Then, with the first cigarette of the day between his lips, he became more sociable.

"Where's your friend?" he inquired.

"Judson?" answered Martin. "Oh, he's outside, fiddling with his contraption, I fancy."

The Major-General gave a half smile. "So you really think there's something in it?"

"That's for you to say, sir."

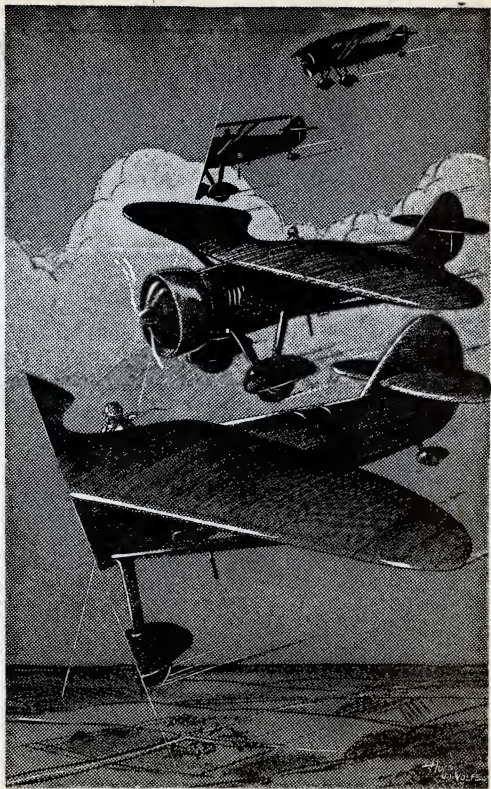
The soldier nodded, and got up from the table.

"May as well go out to the lawn and see if he's ready now," he said, leading the way.

When they arrived Judson was bending attentively over a trapezoid black box mounted upon four well splayed legs. From beneath the box two cables emerged to curl away over the grass like thick black worms, in the direction of the stables. About ten yards further away lay a miscellaneous pile of broken bricks, pieces of wood, and odds and ends of metal, grotesquely out of place on the carpet like lawn.

Judson straightened up as they approached. He was a tall, thin man of

Thousands of warplanes roared toward England and the nation paid no heed. Abruptly there were no planes, and baffled warlords gazed at empty skies.



Twelve hundred planes—gone, vanished into thin air!

thirty of the type which always looks slightly untidy in limbs and clothes despite its most careful efforts at control. In his case the effect was enhanced by thick fair hair which nothing could keep in permanent subjection. Both his long thin face and his pale blue eyes showed a trace of anxiety as he raised them; it was possible that the War Office man might resent being forced to watch a demonstration under such conditions. But his expression cleared when he saw that the other was genial and interested.

"How about it? Ready for us?" the Major-General inquired.

"Yes, sir. It's ready now."

"Good. Where'd you want us to stand? What sort of range has this death-ray of yours got?"

Judson looked hurt.

"It's not a death ray, sir. It's an annihilating screen. This particular machine has a range of a hundred feet over an angle of ninety degrees and is directed vertically upward. If you imagine a large fan, a hundred feet in length and extended to a quarter circle, balanced on its point on this box, that will give you the idea of its field of influence. Actually this is a kind of toy model. It is just as effective as the big one within its range, but the range is small."

The soldier looked curiously at the box. There was not much to see externally save a switch or two. He noticed a slot, six inches by perhaps half an inch, in the top casing; within it was a gleam of glass.

"And the thickness of this 'fan'? The fore and aft spread, so to speak?" he inquired.

"Very little, sir. It is projected at the thickness of half an inch. My tests have shown an increase of about 1/64th of an inch at a hundred feet."

"You mean that it has absolutely no

influence beyond that half inch thick quarter circle?"

"I have discovered none yet, sir. All the same, it is advisable to stand well clear while it is on. I mean, if one were to make a careless movement—"

"Yes, yes, of course. Where do you want us to stand?"

BY Judson's advice they moved ten yards or so toward the house; the side opposite from himself and his pile of rubbish. Judson nodded.

"That's it. Now please don't come any nearer until I have shut off the machine again."

"All right, my boy. We're not fools," said the soldier, testily.

"Sorry, sir. But it really is dangerous though it looks innocent. Here goes, then."

He walked back a few steps, holding a switch attached to a cable. At the full extent of the cable he pressed the switch and dropped it on the grass. A red bulb lighted on top of the box.

"It's on now," he said.

Major-General Stalham felt disappointed. He had not known what to expect, but he was aware that he had counted on some visible or audible manifestation. There was nothing save the red light and the young man's claim that the machine was "on."

Judson walked back to his pile of rubbish and picked up a stone. He faced them across the machine, and drew back his arm.

"Catch," he shouted, flinging the stone toward them.

The soldier instinctively put out his hands to receive it, but the stone did not arrive.

Halfway on its journey, exactly over the machine, it vanished.

Judson chuckled.

"Try again," he said, and lobbed over half a brick. It sailed through the air,

but at the top of its curve it just ceased to be.

The general grunted and stared. "Stone," said Judson, and threw a flint out of existence. He followed it up with a piece of wood and then metal in the form of an iron bar.

The soldier blinked. He had a hazy suspicion that he was being fooled by some kind of conjuring trick. Had he been able to see the emanations from the machine, or if the objects had disappeared with a flash or a bang it would have been less outrageous. Somehow the very neatness and cleanness of the operation encouraged his suspicion.

He and Martin, carefully keeping their distance, walked round to the side to observe the effect from there. It was even more odd to follow the parabola of a flying tin can and see it uncompleted because the can had winked out of existence.

Judson switched off the machine and tossed half a brick over it; it fell with a thud. He switched on once more; a similar half brick never fell.

"This is remarkable," said the general, though even his cautious nature felt that the words were a trifle inadequate.

Martin left his side and hurried into the house. He was back in a few minutes carrying a twelve-bore and a box of cartridges.

"Here you are," he said, handing them over.

A piece of notepaper was pinned to a pair of steps set up on one side of the machine; General Stalham took up a position on the other. He let the paper have the choke barrel and blew the middle out of it. Judson set up another piece of paper and waited until he had reloaded.

"Now try again," he said, as he pressed the switch.

The general let it have left and then

right. He lowered the gun, and stared incredulously at the unharmed paper.

"Wait a minute," he called, and hurriedly reloaded.

Again he fired both barrels in quick succession; still there was no mark on the paper. An expression of real awe came over his face. His voice was uncertain as he spoke.

"My God, Judson, what have you found?"

CHAPTER II

The Power of the Annihilator

"YOU two remember one another, don't you?" said Judson, casually.

Martin found himself shaking hands with a serene young woman in whom it was difficult to recognize the schoolgirl Sheilah Judson of a few years ago.

It was ten days since the demonstration to his uncle, but a rush of business had intervened, making it impossible for him to call at Judson's house until now.

Sheilah was thanking him for helping her brother.

"It wasn't much," he told her. "Juddy really had the whole scheme cut and dried; all I had to do was to be a yes-man. Considering what he had to show, the whole thing was a foregone conclusion. What I want to know is how yesterday's demonstration went. Sorry I couldn't be there, but I had to go over to Paris."

"I think it shook 'em a bit," Judson admitted.

Sheilah laughed. "You know him, Martin, most of his swans are geese. Shook them, indeed! I should say so. I've never seen a body of men so dumb-founded and knocked endways as they were when it had finished. I doubt whether they're really believing their own senses yet. Tell him about it, Tommy."

Judson, fishing in the cupboard for



Martin Stalham

beer bottles, landed his catch, and turned round.

"Sheilah's right," he admitted. "I wish you'd been there to see. They sent an army lorry and a squad of men. We loaded the big thousand yard brute aboard and the little one too, in case of accidents. I mean, the big one had never been tried out properly—it's not the kind of thing you can fool about with in the back yard.

"We followed in style in a staff car to the site of the demonstration; a particularly desolate stretch of the Plain, a few miles beyond the camp. The exact position of the machine and its danger area were marked out, and power lines had been run there ready for us.

"It didn't take long to open the cases and get the bigger machine assembled. And after we'd connected up to the mains there was nothing to do but hang about and wait for the nobs to arrive. They turned up in a whole covey of staff cars about eleven-thirty.

"Your respected uncle was well in evidence, as jumpy as a flea on a hot plate. I don't know quite what the old

boy had been telling them, but he was as nervous as hell lest the whole thing should be a flop—it must have been a good yarn to have got the demonstration arranged so soon. The rest weren't much excited. They drifted up and sniffed round the machine as if it had a bad smell—they might have been more impressed if I'd painted it khaki.

"The show was timed to begin at twelve. About a quarter to they started telephoning to clear the course, running up danger flags, sounding bugles and all the rest of it. At twelve a lesser officer announced to a greater officer that all was clear—it had been perfectly clear for a couple of miles each way all the morning, but now it was technically clear. Then—oh, I forgot to tell you there'd been one or two lorries, a small field gun and some other things drafted up in the course of the morning; they were parked at a respectful distance. Well, then the big noise—he was a Field Marshal, and that speaks well for your uncle's pull, told me to go ahead.

"He and his satellites moved off a bit, so I tagged along too, trailing the switch cable behind me. When they came to anchor I pressed the switch, and the red warning light went on. The bigger machine sets up a semi-circular screen, covering the whole hundred and eighty degrees from side to side.

"Well, what are you waiting for?" the old boy said, shortly.

"Nothing, sir," I said, nicely and politely. "The screen's up; it's for your men to test the resistance of the field." And I explained to him that the game was to get anything past the machine within a thousand yards to either side, but not to go for the machine itself as it wasn't protected at present. He just grunted and gave some orders.

"OUT on the left six men marched up to a line about twenty yards from

the screen. Their timing was perfect. Six pins were drawn, six arms swung over, and six little black bombs sailed away."

Judson chuckled.

"I wish you could have seen the staff's faces when the bombs vanished—the look of relief on your uncle's face was nearly as good. The rest of them stared after the bombs, then they stared at me, and then again at the place where the bombs should have burst. There was a faint thudding noise far away in the distance if you listened for it, but no sign of an explosion. The Field Marshal pulled himself together and ordered another bomb shy. Of course that lot vanished too. Some of the staff began to look at me pretty queerly.

"Well, there's no need to go into all the details. They went through a whole armory of weapons. They put machine guns on it with ordinary and tracer bullets, they pumped shells at it, tried flame throwers and all sorts. Some young fool even wanted to drive a tank at it; I was arguing with him when the accident occurred.

"There was a shout somewhere, and I turned round to see people pointing out to the right. A man was sawing away at the mouth of a bolting horse which was carrying him hell for leather at the screen. Everybody yelled at him to jump clear. I was a hundred yards from the switch then for we'd had to move back when the field gun got to work. I sprinted my best for it, but I was no more than halfway there when the horse and rider ran clean into the screen and vanished. I reached the switch and turned it off. Then I walked back.

"I arrived in a funny sort of silence. It was as if they had only just realized what the screen meant. The man who had suggested the tank idea looked par-



Sheilah Judson

ticularly sick. The rest kept glancing over the plain as if they expected the horseman to reappear suddenly somewhere. We all walked down to the spot where he had disappeared. The hoof-marks were plain up to the screen line—there they stopped dead.

"The old Field Marshal turned and looked at me. He stood quite a time without speaking. Then he said:

"'God forgive you, boy, for what you may have begun.'

"He turned away and went slowly back to his car. He didn't seem to see us or anything about him."

Judson paused. In a different tone he added:

"Well, then it was all over. We packed up and came home."

"And now?" Martin asked.

"Today I've been down at the War Office, talking for hours. It looks as if I shall be having a busy time for a bit. Curious men," he added, reflectively, "they tested it yesterday with most things short of big guns—we shall be floating it on a raft and testing out big naval guns against it next week, by the

way—but what really impressed them, you know, was that man on the horse. It got 'em; meant more than all the rest. Nice, simple minded fellows.”

“I can understand that,” Martin said. “But, tell me Juddy, what actually does happen? I mean, I can understand that there may be a form of radiation that shakes things to bits—a kind of disintegrating wavelength—but it ought to vary with different substances, and there ought to be some kind of residue even if it's only dust in the air. Or I could understand one that would incinerate immediately, but there again there ought to be a residue—certainly of metal—and there ought to be the dickens of a detonation in the case of explosives touching it. As far as I can see it's against nature and science and everything else for things to cease to exist when they hit your screen. The most that can happen to them is that they are changed into something else: a gas, for instance. What actually does happen?”

JUDSON lifted his face out of his tankard, and shook his head.

“That's where you've got me, old boy. And that's a point the War Office people have been hammering at half the day. They can't believe, though I've told them till I'm blue in the face, that I don't know.”

“You don't know!”

“Exactly. I have got hold of a force, but I don't know what that force is. It's another manifestation of the power of electricity. Radio is one, X-ray is another, and heaven knows how many others are waiting to be discovered. All I have found out—and to be frank it was half by accident—is that if you do certain things with an electric current you produce this result.”

“Do you mean to say you've no idea what happens to, say, a brick when you

chuck it into the screen?”

“I do,” he admitted, “though we don't know a great deal yet, we're learning by degrees. For instance, Sheilah noticed on one of the early trials that it acts as a windshield. And there are funny things about sound. We've established that sound does not pass through it, but round it. That wasn't surprising when we knew that it stopped air. But what is odd is the result if you throw a noise at it, so to speak. We set an alarm clock ringing and heaved it into the screen. It, of course, disappeared at once, but the ringing didn't. I went as close to the screen as I dare, and I could still hear it faintly buzzing. A most uncanny sensation first time. And the hand grenades and shells also; there was that faint, far away thudding noise although they had vanished.

“As far as solids are concerned,” Judson explained, “we don't know a lot, but we can show you a few specimens.” He led the way into his study, and picked up a piece of stick from a pile of objects in one corner.

“That,” he explained, “was once an old broom. Sheilah pushed the head of it into the screen, goodness knows what happened to that, but there is what was left in her hand.”

Martin examined the stick. The end which had touched the screen was a bushy mass of splayed out fibres.

“It was queer,” Sheilah told him. “The whole stick sort of shuddered in my hands; I could feel little tremors running up and down it, but it didn't seem to twist or pull in any way.”

There were other examples: an iron rod twisted off, a glass rod curiously fractured. Martin inspected them all with interest.

“It's very odd indeed,” he said. “You mean to say that you thrust a rod into the screen, that the end of it disappears at once, that the end of it does not

protrude on the other side of the screen—and yet it is not severed immediately?"

"Exactly. Sometimes—with the iron bar, for instance—it takes two or three seconds to part. But if you find that odd, look at this."

He handed over a small branch from an oak. A few withered leaves still clung to it. The thick end showed a bunch of wrenched fibres similar to those on the broomstick.

"We found it on the lawn one day when we were clearing up after an experiment," he added.

Martin looked at it. It was quite unremarkable.

"Well," he said, "it looks as if you had set the machine up too close to a tree, and lopped it off."

"It does," Judson agreed. "But the trouble is, old boy, that we haven't an oak tree here, and there isn't one anywhere near that either of us knows of."

CHAPTER III

A Weapon of Defense

MARTIN became a not infrequent visitor at the Judsons' during the next eighteen months, but he saw little of Judson himself. Judson, in fact, seemed to see very little of his home. Much of his time was spent traveling, and the intervals mostly in his study. Sheilah was worried about him.

"They're working him to death," she told Martin. "When he's here he works until three or four in the morning and when he's away he's being rushed here and there all the time. He can't stand that kind of thing too long. Besides, the organization and business side isn't really his kind of work."

Martin agreed. The few glimpses he had had of Judson were enough to show that. There were new lines on his face

and signs of strain round his eyes; he fidgeted incessantly and was short tempered with his sister and with everyone else.

"It'll end in a breakdown," she said unhappily. "Lots of people have told him so, but he won't take any notice."

"I know," Martin told her. "I hear from my uncle that he's so edgy that he's becoming impossible to work with. But the trouble is that they're all in a hurry, and they can't get on without him. He keeps too much in his own hands, and won't let go. Why on earth doesn't he depute more and take it easier?"

"I'm not sure. I think he wants to keep all the control he can because at the bottom of everything he's a bit afraid. You know what the old Field Marshal said to him, well, he still makes fun of that—makes fun of it too often for a man with an easy mind. I may be wrong, Martin, but I've an idea that he thinks he can stop it if it doesn't seem to be working out as he expects."

"But that's ridiculous. He'd never have a chance now."

"You'd think so, but I don't know. He may be keeping some essential part of the machine a secret."

"But would they take it on such terms, do you think?"

"They wouldn't like it, but he makes the terms. Tommy can be remarkably stubborn, you know."

Whether Sheilah was right or not about the cause it was clear that Judson could not keep on at his present pitch indefinitely. On her behalf Martin tried to reason with him. Judson put it aside.

"You don't understand, old boy. The work's got to be done, and done damn quick. There's no time to lay off."

"But you've been working madly for over a year now. Surely there's someone else who can give you a breather

for a bit," Martin protested.

"Not now, not yet. It ought to slack off in a few months, then I'll see. We're working against time, and we've got to beat it. Now, if you don't mind, old boy, there's some work I must get on with. . . ."

THE scheme developed with remarkably little publicity. Large metal boxes on stands set in concrete began to appear here and there. There was one on the top of the London University tower, one on Bush House, others on Westminster Cathedral, on a chimney of Battersea Power Station, on a tower of the Alexandra Palace, and on one of the remaining towers of the old Crystal Palace. There was said to be one even on the top of the cross of Saint Paul's. It was generally understood that the boxes contained air raid alarms of some kind though there were varied opinions on how they would work.

Other things less obvious than the metal boxes appeared. There were two telephone boxes on the most exposed parts of Hampstead Heath and another at Highgate which had locked doors and permanent "out of order" notices on them. There were several objects which looked like transformers to be found here and there upon high ground both in Surrey and Middlesex. Also on Surrey hilltops there appeared some new summer-house-like huts reputed to be look-out shelters for fire-wardens. Out Dagenham way were to be found occasional oddly positioned structures bearing an entirely superficial and quite exasperating likeness to public lavatories. Down near Bromley several small water towers arose; only the local authorities knew that they contained no water—and they were at a loss to know what they did contain.

Nor was this outbreak of decidedly minor architecture confined to the Lon-

don area. Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds, Glasgow, Edinburgh were a few of the many cities and towns it invaded. Certain seaports learned to their surprise that the landmarks which had served them perfectly well for several generations were inadequate and that it was urgently necessary for them to have new and more solid landmarks; as the Government unexpectedly undertook to defray the entire cost, they had them. Comment was sparse. True, certain of the unusable telephone boxes came in for scathing remarks in letters to local papers, but nobody can tell merely from its external appearance whether a transformer or a fusebox is unusable or not, and there is a natural reticence on the subject of being taken in by a dummy public lavatory.

If it was suspected that numbers of heavy cases leaving England for Singapore, Aden, Hong Kong and other strategically important spots did not in fact all contain pianos or agricultural tractors, no one mentioned it. There was activity in the naval dockyards and at the naval bases. New, strange bulges appeared at the foretops of His Majesty's ships of war. There was no disguising them. Foreign agents learned by subtle questions that the British had discovered and were employing a new tap-proof method of wireless communication. Their various governments thereupon started to spend much time and money in the attempt to tap the untappable, not to say non-existent, system, and to disbelieve all normal radio messages.

THE summer passed. The Roman Empire continued to rebuild itself in a series of sabre-rattling crises. The Reich made public references to fertile and foreign lands which were the natural heritage of Wotan's children. The words of democracy heartened by the

voice of freedom from across the water, grew a little more dependable. The Balkans took heart and stiffened slightly. There was a faint stirring in the east; a suggestive clink from the hammer and sickle. The sensation that the curtain was about to go up grew more acute.

The Rome-Berlin axis, though still slightly out of true, held together. An inconsiderable island off the Estonian coast was acquired by the Reich in conditions which resembled a forced sale. The Scandinavians looked on uneasily.

Late in October came a rising in Algeria, trouble in South West Africa, and renewed demands for colonies. Then, while anxious efforts were being made to localize the trouble on the north African coast, an Italian troopship and its escort vanished without trace on its way from Sicily to Tripoli. Threats, accusations and counter accusations flew wildly. In Government buildings in all parts of the world men nodded as they read. "Here it comes," they said, with a half sigh of relief from the tension that was over.

There was no declaration of war; it was not expected that there would be. The value of surprise had grown too high to be thrown away lightly. It was acknowledged that the one who could first strike a crippling blow was half way to winning. For three or four days vituperation erupted from the presses; then came action.

At ten o'clock on the night of November the fifth trusted members of the Nazi Party engaged themselves in long, and sometimes not very important, foreign telephone calls. It came about that all lines from Germany were in use. The scheme was admirably calculated to stop any news getting out of the country, save in one particular—that the first batch of Germans so anxious to greet their friends abroad all wished to

do so at exactly ten o'clock G. M. T., not a minute before and not a minute after. This curious occurrence taken in conjunction with the knowledge that the Belgian wires were also humming with business deals or friendly greetings in German, and that there was unusual pressure on the Italian service also, was warning enough.

The general public knew nothing. There was no dimming of lights, no alarming notice from the radio; superficially all remained normal.

IN an office in Whitehall a group of experts hurriedly summoned together sat in front of a large scale map of southwest England which covered the whole of one wall. There was little talking. Judson, fidgeting and lighting one cigarette from another continuously, looked ill to the point of collapse. There was sweat on his forehead, and the cigarette trembled in his fingers as he raised it. The old Field Marshal muttered to his aide to get the fellow a drink quickly.

On the tables were maps of smaller scale. Below the wall map an officer sat at a keyboard which suggested a calculating machine. At the back of the room were two operators with private exchanges. They called out telephone messages as they received them.

"British merchant vessel *Ellen Kate*, ten miles off Ostende reports large fleet of planes without lights passed over her in westerly direction, 11:32 p. m."

"Mail plane, Amsterdam to Croydon, reports large number of planes without lights at great height heading west. Latitude, 51.56 north. Longitude, 2.55 east. 11:36 p. m."

"H. M. Destroyer *Nous* reports considerable number of planes, estimate impossible, proceeding west; 12 to 14 thousand feet, without lights. Latitude, 51.50 north. Longitude, 2.30 east.

11:40 p. m."

An orderly entered the room silently and handed a sheet of paper to the Field Marshal. He read it, and passed it on to the Marshal of the Air. The message ran: "H. M. S. *Unappeasable* reports large fleet of planes left Sicily. Passed south over Licata 11:30 p. m." The Marshal of the Air looked up, his lips silently forming the word "Malta." The Field Marshal nodded. Both turned their attention back to the maps and the telephonists. Messages were still coming in:

"Swedish liner, *Varmland*, Gothenburg to New York, reports fleet of unlighted planes to the south of her, apparently headed west. Latitude, 51.60 north. Longitude, 2 degrees east. 11:45 p. m."

"U. S. S. R. merchant vessel *Turksib*, London to Leningrad, reports large number of planes passing north of her, heading west. Latitude, 51.71 north. Longitude, 1.90 east. 11:48 p. m."

An officer looked up swiftly.

"They've split, sir."

"Warn Harwich."

"Harwich on the line, sir. They've heard. They're passing on warning to Leicester, Birmingham and Manchester. Hull on the line, sir. They're warning Leeds and Sheffield. North Foreland calling, sir. The detectors there have picked them up. They're passing north of the coast, following the estuary. They estimate five or six hundred planes."

A pause followed, then:

"Shoeburyness calling. They think the fleet's divided again. Chatham calling. They say they will proceed independently according to plan."

"Stand by," ordered the Field Marshal abruptly. The man beside the map stiffened and poised his hands over the keyboard.

"Horizontal screens, sections D and

E," directed the old man.

The operator pressed two keys. The districts east of London, both north and south of the river glowed faintly on the wall map.

"Tilbury reports that they are over-head," intoned the telephonist.

"Alignment Seven," snapped the Field Marshal.

The operator's hands rattled over the keys. A string of lights broke out on the map. They ran in a curve from Brentwood, through Romford, Ilford, Woolwich, and Sidcup to Eynsford. A row of bright points which meant that the Judson Annihilator had come into action in earnest for the first time.

There was dead silence in the room for perhaps three minutes, then:

"Add Alignment Twelve," said the steady voice.

Again a string of lights starting at Brentwood sprang out on the map, but this time it ran by way of East Horddon, Orsett, Tilbury, Rochester, Kingsdown.

In that irregular glowing circle there was contained to the best belief of everyone in the room every attacking plane of the southern division save the few handled by Chatham.

Someone opened a window. Above the regular murmur of the traffic there was another sound; the far away drone of hundreds of engines. Most of the men in the room crowded closer to the window and held their breath to listen the better.

"It's getting less," said someone. "By God, it's getting less."

Judson got up unsteadily. He looked round the room with a rather foolish smile.

"Well, it's the end for some of you chaps," he said, quickly. "Better start looking for new jobs tomorrow." He began to laugh and sway on his feet.

His neighbor caught him as he fell.

"The fellow's tight," he said. "I'm not surprised. I'd be tight myself if I'd done half what he's done."

NOVEMBER the sixth dawned in London a clear, sunny day. Suburban trains decanted their regular thousands, offices and shops opened, trade went on as usual. Yet for all the appearance of normality there was a tenuous, indefinable sense of something in the wind. Fleet Street, which was buzzing with rumors, found little substantial enough to print. The later editions carried an official government regret for any disturbance its surprise aerial maneuvers might have caused to residents in east London and in certain other parts of the country. Contenting itself with that, Whitehall sat back and awaited developments, happily picturing the consternation in Berlin and Rome.

And consternation there was. Even a totalitarian state cannot hope to hush up indefinitely the complete disappearance of a large part of its air force and most of its best flyers. Agents estimated that in all, bombers and fighters to the number of a thousand or twelve hundred had set out upon the greatest raid in history. They had kept touch by radio until the English coast was reached—after that there had been silence. The cones of the home plane detectors remained turned skyward to catch the first sound of the return. Radio operators waited throughout the night for news, and in the dawn they were still waiting.

Official accounts written beforehand were set up in type and held ready; press time came and the accounts remained unused. London and all the other cities of England were untouched; even from the lips of their Embassy and consular staffs Berlin could scarcely believe it. Weary groundstaffs still wait-

ed ready on the flying fields. The underground hangars remained forlorn. Radio men still called desperately into the unresponsive ether.

Rumors of disaster started to creep out from the flying fields and the newspaper offices. Those who had heard the fleet set out began to talk. The fiasco could not be kept quiet; the friends and relatives of the missing men could not all be quieted; there were too many of them. Gradually the tale got around of a new Armada which had never returned.

Similarly in Italy. A fleet estimated at about seven hundred planes had set out to blow Malta to bits. Malta still lay unperturbed in the kindly sunshine—but the planes; il Duce's pride which were to 'darken the sky with their wings'; where were they?

No one seemed to know; no one *did* know.

A near panic spread through the army councils of the world.

England professed an inability to understand the situation. She had a number of planes up practicing on the night of the 5th; all had landed safely. But she understood that several German and Italian planes, also practicing, had disappeared. She offered help in the search, if informed of the localities of the disappearances.

Totalitarian speeches reached masterly heights of face-saving, but the planes were gone and the pick of the flyers with them. A new force must be trained, but—and here lay the real root of apprehension—for what? To vanish from the face of the earth like the rest?

CHAPTER IV

Strange Occurrences

IT WAS four months later that Martin met the Judsons on their return from Cornwall. Letters from Sheilah

had told him that her brother was making a good recovery from the strain of overwork, and they had not exaggerated. Judson was looking better than he had at any time since the demonstration of the machine to Major-General Stalham. Martin's interest, however, was chiefly in Sheilah. In that time he had seen her only on two of her brief visits to London; hurried, unsatisfactory meetings which had had to be worked in between appointments—no fit occasions to find out whether she had made up her mind yet.

Things had been in that stage a long time now. She liked him, oh, yes, she liked him; she was fond of him. But marriage, well, that was different. Oh, yes, she'd sooner marry him than any one else she knew; but she wasn't sure that she wanted to marry at all—not at present. She didn't know; she couldn't make up her mind. A most uncomfortable and not very flattering state of affairs, Martin felt. A different type of man would, he knew, have forced the issue long ago; but he avoided that, aware that though failure would make him miserable, success would leave him uneasy. He preferred a voluntary answer, whichever it might be, to one sprung by shock tactics.

Judson was talkative, rambling from one subject to another. He inquired after Martin's uncle.

"How is the old boy? Haven't seen him since the great day. Haven't seen any of them, as a matter of fact. No loss to either side. I don't like them, and they despise me."

"Despise you?" Martin echoed, surprisedly.

"Well, it's partly that and partly disapproval. For one thing it has now dawned on them that the annihilator has upset the entire military apple-cart, and for another they feel that there's something ungentlemanly about it as a

weapon. They've put up with me because they had to, but they don't want to have more to do with me than they must. To your professional soldier war is a game, a kind of super chess—civilians like you and me who look upon it as a mess to be cleared up as soon as possible are gate-crashers and boors."

Martin understood, and agreed:

"I know. We've a number in the family. But what about you, Juddy? What are you going to do now it's over?"

"Me. Oh, now I can get on with useful and sensible applications of the annihilator. There are all sorts of things one might do with it. It will be useful for rubbish disposal, for instance—just tip the stuff onto a screen, and it vanishes. No more dumps, no more hideous slag heaps. It may be possible to use it for smoke disposal so that we shall have decent, clean cities. I don't know, there are plenty of possibilities, but the first thing to do is to learn more about it; make it reasonably safe to handle; work out positive controls; find an insulator if possible, and all that kind of thing. We're going to get down to that as soon as we can get the stuff together."

"We," Martin noticed. That meant that Sheilah would be helping.

It did. Sheilah admitted it unhappily. A long conversation with her settled nothing new; it criss-crossed back and forth over the same old ground, and got nowhere. She ended miserably: "It's no good, Martin. I've got to be sure, and I'm not absolutely sure. And that makes it unfair for you. Martin, why don't you find someone else? You deserve someone else, Martin—a nice sensible girl who can make up her own mind, and make you happy."

"There isn't anyone else," Martin said.

JUDSON took a roomy house in Surrey. It stood in forty acres of wall encircled grounds a few miles from Dorking, on the lower slopes of the hills overlooking the country to the south. Workmen were busy on it for some weeks and when he and his sister moved into it at the end of April it had become part dwelling house and part experimental workshops and laboratories. An electric alarm fence had been run around inside the boundary wall. Two assistants lived in the house, and two burly individuals who seemed to have no well defined duties occupied the erstwhile coachman's quarters. The ex-policeman who dwelt with his wife in the gatehouse gave all visitors severe scrutiny, and unless their names were on his list telephoned to the house before admitting them. Martin on his first visit had the sensation that he lived in a state of invisible siege.

"It's all rather irritating and melodramatic," Sheilah confessed, "but we hadn't any choice in the matter. It was a case of putting up with what the War Office calls 'adequate protection of official secrets' or doing no work on it at all."

Judson had overcome some technical difficulties and produced an annihilator throwing a quarter circle of ten feet radius. It had led to some interesting discoveries. One was that for annihilation it was necessary for the object to pass through the screen either by its own motion or by movement of the screen itself.

They took the ten foot projector into the garden which was still untidy from the neglect of years. In front of a dreary looking laurel bush Judson set the machine low on the ground. He tilted the projection slot upward, switched on and brought the invisible screen down to horizontal. The bush vanished from the top downward until

only a ragged stump remained.

"As I tilted it the bush passed through the plane of the screen," he said. "But—" he searched around and found a half dead tree. "Watch this," he added.

The machine was set up again, this time the slot was horizontal, pointed directly at the trunk.

He switched on, tapped the machine lightly, and switched off again. The tree, with a tired, slow motion, leaned over and fell in a crackle of its rotten branches. Martin stared at the stump.

"If you were to measure it you would find that a slice approximately half an inch thick has been taken out of the trunk," Judson told him. "The work's not quite as neat as a saw, but it ought to revolutionize the lumber industry."

"Or quarry work," Martin suggested. "Or canal digging and drainage work." Judson hesitated at that. He frowned.

"You'd think so," he agreed, "but that's one of the things I'm up against. There's something funny about that, something fundamental about it I can't make out yet."

"You mean you can't make the solid earth disappear," Martin smiled. "Well, there's something consoling about that. But if a brick—why not earth?"

"Exactly. Why not? But I'll show you."

A few moments later he and Martin bent over a patch which had been swept by the annihilator's rays. In theory there should have been a short ditch ten feet deep. There was not even a depression. Martin prodded his fingers into the soil.

"It's real enough," he said, amazedly.

A few minutes ago the space in front of them had been a patch of barren earth with a covering of last year's beech leaves. Now, along the line

where the screen had passed, and nowhere else, was a covering of coarse grass.

"If it had been the other way around—" he said, feebly.

"Quite," Judson agreed. "But it isn't."

Later Martin mentioned the phenomenon to Sheilah. She nodded without surprise.

"I know, there've been several things like that. Did you hear about my birds?"

Martin shook his head.

"That happened about ten days ago. I was working in the lab with the small machine when I suddenly found two swallows flying wildly around the room. They couldn't have flown in just then because it happened that all the windows were closed. And it doesn't seem likely that they'd been there all the time without my knowing because I'd been working for an hour and a half before they began fluttering about. They just came from nowhere.

"But that wasn't nasty, like the thing that happened some months ago near London. They were trying out one of the defense machines when something plopped down close to the projector. When they went up to it they found that it was a man's hand hacked off at the wrist. It was still warm when they picked it up, but it belonged to nobody who was there.

"There's some explanation, of course," she added, "some angle to the thing which neither Tommy nor I nor anyone else has any idea of yet. But we don't seem to be getting much nearer the answer."

Martin left later with plenty to think about and a feeling that there was an element of danger which none of their elaborate precautions covered. He had a sensation that Judson and Sheilah were not unlike people walking too close

to the edge of a cliff in a thick fog. It was no light uneasiness, it would not be dismissed, and remained as a background to all his conscious thoughts. Next Sunday, he determined, he would have it out with Sheilah and try once more to get her away from it all. But that left time for a lot to happen.

ON FRIDAY evening as Martin entered his club, intending to dine, the porter handed him a telephone message.

Mr Judson urgently wishes you to ring him as soon as possible.

Five minutes later he heard Judson's voice.

"Thank the Lord," it said. "I've been trying to get you all day. Martin, it's about Sheilah. She's disappeared."

Martin put out a hand to steady himself. He felt as if he had had a physical blow. At the back of his mind a voice was gabbling—"It's happened. This is what you were afraid of. That damned machine has killed her." He took a grip of himself. His voice was curiously flat as he said. "I'll be there in an hour or so."

It was a few minutes under the hour when he stopped his car with a spatter of gravel in front of the house. Judson himself opened the door and led him straight to the lounge.

"What's happened?" Martin asked.

Judson poured some whisky into a tumbler and handed it over.

"Drink this. I'll tell you. It happened about twelve o'clock this morning. I was upstairs working out some results. Sheilah was on the front lawn. She'd got a one hundred and eighty degree projector there and was trying out some smoke experiments. All at once I heard her scream. I thought she'd hurt herself somehow, and rushed to the window.

"She was down there on the lawn,

and there was a man there too—a big fellow with a beard and ragged clothes. He'd got hold of Sheilah by the wrist, and she was fighting like a demon. She screamed again; I shouted and the man looked up. I just caught a glimpse of his face as I turned to bolt downstairs for all I was worth.

"It can't have taken more than a few seconds, but when I came out both Sheilah and the man had gone. Just as I arrived the two guards came pelting around the corner of the house. They were at the back somewhere when she screamed, and they'd seen nobody as they ran to the front. One of the assistants turned up a moment later. He'd seen the struggle from the workshop window, but like me he'd missed the end of it.

"The alarm fence hadn't been touched, so it was clear that they hadn't got out of the grounds yet. We split into couples and searched the place. We didn't find a trace of Sheilah or of the man. The lodgekeeper swore that the gate had not been open since half-past eleven. We know the alarm fence was in perfect order because we tested it. One of the guards suggested that the man might have climbed a tree and swung over the fence that way—it's not likely because there are plenty of alarm wires about connected with the fence, besides that didn't explain Sheilah's disappearance.

"We put the local police on to it at once. They've pulled in one or two tramps, but not the man we wanted. And so far they've found no trace of Sheilah.

"Whitehall's been on the phone cursing and swearing. They've got men watching the boats and the airports. I tell you, Martin, it's a hell of a business. There's no saying what they might do to her."

"They?" Martin said.

"Yes, the people who've got hold of her. Don't you see what it means? They'll think she can give them the secret of the annihilator, and there's nothing they'll stop at to get it."

"But can she?"

"No. I wish to heaven she could. She's worked with it a lot, as you know, but I've never told her the basis of the construction—I thought it would be safer for her not to know. My God, what a fool thing to do! If she could tell them, that'd be that. But if they think she's just holding out on them. . . . There's damn little chivalry in the espionage business. Oh, Lord, what the hell can we do about it?"

Martin sat silent. His reasoning power was swamped for the present. Instead of thinking he was looking at a series of fearsome mental images which he tried and failed to suppress.

When, some hours later, they went upstairs, the idea of sleep was impossible; even to rest in a chair, intolerable. For more than two hours he paced back and forth across the room smoking furiously. At length he found himself methodically laying out each aspect of the affair, considering it and weighing the probabilities.

There was only one way out of the grounds which would leave no trace—Judson's screen. What way into the grounds would leave no trace? Was that also Judson's screen?

There had been the birds, the severed hand, and, still longer ago, the inexplicable oak branch. . . .

Surely the answer was that the annihilator did not annihilate. But what did it do?

With that question still in his mind Martin dropped on the bed and surprisingly fell asleep.

THE birds woke him. It was still early, soon after six. He crossed

the room and looked out on the new late Spring day. The shadows still slanted, and the lines thrown by the tree trunks barred the lawn below him. In the middle of the open space he noticed the projector Sheilah had been using yesterday. It had been switched off, of course, but no one had remembered to put it away. He stood motionless for five full minutes, staring at it; then with his mind made up he turned and left the room cautiously.

The machine was in order. He had been half afraid lest the lead to the mains might have been disconnected, but the red warning light flashed on as he pressed the switch. To make certain he scrambled his handkerchief into a ball and threw it into the invisible screen. It vanished.

Martin stepped back a few steps and braced himself. Somewhere behind him a window opened. Judson's voice called in alarm:

"No. Martin. Stop it, you damned fool!"

Martin clenched his fists, put his head down, and ran full tilt at the annihilator's screen!

CHAPTER V

An Amazing New World

SOMETHING tripped him. He fell forward with a queer twisting, wrenching sensation, and met the ground with a thud which winded him. He struggled, gasping, to a sitting position. Not until then did he realize that he was no longer on the lawn.

The first thing to catch his eyes was the handkerchief he had thrown through the screen. It lay beside him on a tuft of wiry grass. He stared at it a moment and then lifted his gaze.

He sat in an open space, a kind of gap in a hillside wood. Trees closed in

his view on three sides, but in front the ground was clearer, encumbered only by shrubs and sprawling brakes of bramble. The slight downward slope enabled him to see over them into the distance beyond. The valley in the foreground was a sea of tree tops; featureless save where some slight rise suggested a frozen green wave. Behind it, bounding the scene, rose a ridge of smoothly rounded hills. He gazed instantly at them, following the contours; there was no doubt about it, however unfamiliar the immediate surroundings, they remained the same line of Downs which one could see from Judson's lawn.

He turned around to look again at the trees near him. They grew haphazard, unthinned and with little room to develop. Unrestrained ivy climbed to throttle them, and many of the trunks it had killed leaned on their still living neighbors for support. Among the boles was a choked undergrowth whence protruded occasional broken limbs of trunks slowly rotting in the tangle below.

Behind him the edge of the wood was only a few yards away. Nothing appeared to intervene between him and it. Thoughtfully, he reached for his handkerchief; he crumpled it up and threw it toward the undergrowth. Five feet from his hand it whisked out of existence. A moment later it re-appeared, materializing from nowhere, to flutter down beside him. He got to his feet. As he straightened, another white object flew close past his head. He retrieved it; a piece of paper wrapped around a stone. On it was a hurried scribble in Judson's hand:

"What's happened? Where are you?"

Martin found a pencil in his pocket. He turned the paper over and considered his answer. He looked again at the line of the Downs. They told un-

mistakably where he was, but—He shook his head, and wrote simply:

"Am all right. Will try to find Sheilah. Screen invisible from this side. On no account move it. Keep it going till we come back."

He rewrapped the stone and threw it back. Leaving his handkerchief to mark the spot, he went to the trees and returned with an armful of rotten branches. He broke them into smaller pieces and laid them carefully in a double row leading to the invisible screen. The thought that one had only to run up the path they marked to be projected back into the familiar everyday world gave considerable comfort.

So far he had acted in a dreamlike, half automatic way, forcing himself to believe in the reality of the surroundings.

A little distance away a laurel bush lay on its side. The leaves were turning brown, and the stem was badly mangled. He recalled Judson's demonstration the previous week-end. Not far away from it lay a curious wooden disc. He remembered Judson saying that a half inch slice from the trunk of the dead tree had been removed—well, here it was. But where was it—and where was he?

He stood still, listening. There was no sound but the rustle of the leaves in the light breeze, the song of small birds close at hand, and far away the call of a cuckoo. It was disturbing. In every place he had known save on the tops of high mountains there had been at least distant reminders of human presence; the sound of a car, the distant rattle of a train, the whistle of an engine, something to give assurance that one was not alone. Here, there was a sense of desolation.

He began a search of the open space. The result was disappointing until he drew toward the western edge, but there

he came upon the faint suggestion of a track winding close to the fringe of the woods. It was not well trodden and showed little sign of recent use, but that it had been made by human feet was indisputable.

He looked carefully around once more to fix the aspect of the place in his memory before he left.

Soon he was in the wood traveling circuitously though with little difficulty southward.

At the bottom of the hill he crossed a stream by means of a fallen tree, and picked up the track again on the further bank with some difficulty. He consciously realized for the first time that whatever else might have changed, the season of the year remained about the same. It was an unwelcome thought for he was growing uncomfortably conscious of his hunger. He began to regret that he had not thought of asking Judson to throw food through the screen.

A short stretch of unexpected uphill led on to a sandy ridge where the deciduous trees gave way to pines. Among them was a pile of rubbish, grass and weed grown, but showing the ends of squared stones in places. He climbed to the top of it to get his bearings. To the north the wooded hillside was broken in several places by patches of grass, but he was unable to identify for certain the one on which he had found himself. In the other directions stretched a plain of swaying tree tops without a landmark; not a spire, nor a chimney, nor a power pylon showed above them. Far away to the east there was a smudge of smoke, save for that nothing but the hills, the sky, and the trees—unending trees.

He descended to the path again and followed it doggedly. At the foot of the ridge a better used path joined it from the right, and the two bore eastward as

one giving him hope that it must lead to a habitation of some kind before long. Down on the level the ground was moister and the increased lushness of the bushes shut him in, limiting his visibility to two or three yards in each direction. The discovery of the first clearing, therefore, took him completely by surprise. One moment he was imprisoned in the trees; the next he stood looking over an open space of five or six acres.

He stopped in astonishment for the rectangular patch had not only been cleared, but tilled and planted. Rows of pale shoots which as a townsman he could not identify were already thrusting upward. He looked to right and left, half expecting to see bent figures at work, but there was no one in sight. Nevertheless, it was with rising hope that he went on, following the line which the path took straight across the field.

Halfway to the other side he stopped, staring down at the impression of a woman's heel . . .

It's owner, he noticed as he went on, was not the last who had used the path. In many places the marks had been wholly or partly obliterated by shapeless impressions such as a soft slipper might make. Once, a little to the side of the main beat he found the print of a man's boot with a plain sole and nailed heel. It made him curious, for he could find no repetition of it, and was irritably aware that to a man of experience the signs might read as plainly as a direction book.

His eyes were on the print and he was unaware that there was any other living person near until a voice spoke suddenly close behind him.

He started violently and spun around. Ten feet away stood a young man in a soiled and much worn grey uniform who held in a steady, capable hand a large

automatic pistol. Martin raised his hands instinctively though he had not understood the other's words. The man spoke again. Martin shook his head:

"Can you speak English?" he asked.

"Enough," said the other. "You will stand still," he added.

He stepped closer. The muzzle of the pistol pressed against Martin's solar plexus as its owner patted pockets and armpits experimentally. Satisfied that Martin was unarmed, he withdrew a pace.

"How you are here?" he demanded.

Martin thought quickly.

"I don't know. Something funny has happened. I was walking in a garden—then I suddenly found myself in the woods up there. I don't understand it. But," he added more aggressively, "I don't see that that gives you any right to threaten me with a pistol. What's going on? Who are you?"

He was doubtful whether the other understood much of what he had said, but it seemed the right line to take. The man was impassive, he showed neither belief nor disbelief. After a few moments' consideration:

"You come with me," he decided, and waved his pistol to indicate that Martin should turn around. "You keep to the path. Not to run."

"But, look here—" Martin began, more for the form of the thing than for any other purpose.

"You come," said the man with the pistol, briefly.

CHAPTER VI

Incredible Discoveries

THE language difficulty was a barrier. In the two miles or so of woods and occasional oases of cultivation which followed the man spoke only to give directions where the path branched once or twice. Martin

marched obediently, acutely conscious of the pistol behind him, pondering what its presence and that of its owner implied.

They arrived at their destination almost without warning. The trees ended abruptly as usual. A few scrawny looking cows of no recognizable breed and some sheep of equally miscellaneous descent grazed on a meadow of rough grass. A small stream which crossed the place north to south was bridged by a few trunks crudely squared and set together. Close to the further bank clustered a village of wattle walled, thatched huts.

They crossed the bridge, passed between two of the insecure looking buildings, and came out on an open space. The inescapable first impression of the place was its smell. Each of the encircling hut dwellers appeared to dispose of his refuse by flinging it just outside the door so that the whole place was fringed with heaps of reeking, rotting matter. Opposite some of the doors and in front of the main exits and entrances the filth had been shovelled aside to leave a free path, and as these gauntlets were used swarms of gorging flies rose on either hand.

The few men and women who were to be seen were vastly outnumbered by the children who played in the dust or crawled adventurously over the heaps of filth. The smallest of these were naked, but the older ones and every adult in sight wore garments of coarsely woven, undyed and, it would appear, unwashed wool. On their feet were cross laced pieces of soft leather. The men were bearded more or less unkemptly, the lank hair of the women was mostly worn long and in plaits. None took more than passing notice of Martin and his captor. Martin, in spite of the pistol, stopped, and then looked at the other in amazement. The man

wrinkled his nose and shook his head.

"Swine. We teach them," he said, disgustedly.

They turned to the left. Further up the bank of the stream and well clear of the village they drew near a log built house which if not luxurious, was a great improvement on anything the village had shown. At the rear, a clumsy, undershot water wheel turned slowly. On a small, roofed veranda in front, two men in uniforms similar to his captor's were sitting in comfortable, crude chairs. The only other article of furniture present was a machine gun mounted on a block of wood.

The man with Martin shifted his pistol to his left hand and raised his right. "Heil Hitler!" he said.

The other two, one verging on middle age, and the other little more than a boy, rose and responded though their attention was on Martin. The new arrival reported rapidly in German, then all four entered the house.

The main room was lit dimly by two windows. There was no glass in them and they could be closed only by shutters of clay-filled basket work. Three or four chairs and a table ingeniously constructed from roughly trimmed wood were set on the naked earth floor. The rear wall was in shadow but he could make out a large wooden pulley which turned continuously, and the slow movement of the water-wheel beyond made a background of incessant creaks and groans.

The senior man pulled a chair up to the table. He produced a notebook, opened it carefully, and fixed Martin with a direct gaze.

"Your name, occupation, nationality and place of birth?" he said in fluent, but throaty English.

"Just wait a minute," Martin objected. "I want to know what's happened first. Everything's crazy. A few

hours ago I was walking in an ordinary English garden. Now the whole world's gone topsy-turvy. Miles of forest, no people, no houses—except an incredible stinking hut village—and you. I want to know what's happened. Am I mad? You must explain."

The man at the table shook his head.

"I am not here to explain. You are an enemy subject, and our prisoner. Your name?"

"Enemy subject! What do you mean? There's no war."

HE WAS aware that they were all looking at him intently, seeming not to believe him. He went on:

"I tell you. I was in London yesterday. There's no war in Europe—and no immediate sign of it. There's trouble in the East, and the Red Army is advancing in Brazil, but there isn't war in Europe. It's ridiculous to say that I am an enemy subject."

"You were in London yesterday?" his questioner asked, slowly.

"Certainly I was." Martin put his hand in his pocket and pulled out some letters. "Here you are, look at them, look at the postmarks and see the date."

The man took the letters. All three bent over them and exchanged remarks. The leader looked up again.

"These may be genuine, but they do not prove that there is no war. Letters are delivered even in wartime."

"But I tell you—"

"War began on the 5th of November," the other interrupted, dogmatically. "If, as you say, there is no war, when was peace made?"

"But war didn't begin then. It—"

On the 5th of November Germany sent out an aerial fleet to bomb London. If you are trying to tell me that England and France failed to reply with military action, then I do not believe you."

"But London was not attacked,"

Martin protested. He affected to think back. "I remember that there was some international excitement somewhere about then. It was said that Germany had lost a great number of planes on maneuvers, and Italy too, as it happened, but the papers were never quite clear as to how many or what actually happened to them. However, it is quite certain that there was no war."

The three Germans looked at one another. They were a trifle less confident. The leader turned back to Martin.

"Do you know how many planes were lost in these 'maneuvers'?" he asked.

"No," Martin admitted, "though according to the rumors it was a considerable number. The whole thing seemed to be kept as quiet as possible."

"I see," said the other, thoughtfully.

After a moment or two of frowning contemplation he rose and crossed to the back wall, near the turning pulley. He did something there and began to talk rapidly in German. It took Martin some seconds to realize that the dark corner held a small wireless transmitter. After a short conversation he returned.

"I have orders that you are to be sent to headquarters for examination. As it is late today for starting, you will leave tomorrow at dawn."

It was an unpleasant suggestion. Martin had no wish to go to headquarters, wherever that might be. His object was to stay in the neighborhood and search for Sheilah. But the subject of the girl was not easily broached. If he were to let it be known that he was searching for her his captors would immediately and rightly assume that his presence was not accidental. Once let that become apparent and they would do their best to find out how much he did know. The situation was out of hand at present, and he could see no satisfactory means of dealing with it. He shrugged his shoulders with a fatalistic

acceptance.

"Then may I have some food?" he asked. "I've eaten nothing today."

THE meal produced for him was of salted meat, served in a wooden dish, a bowl of chopped root vegetables, a few slabs of hard, dark bread, a little butter and some cheese. A woman, evidently from the hut village, made it ready for him. He watched her curiously as she came and went between the table and an adjoining room.

Like the others he had seen she was not attractive to the eye. Her single, clumsy garment of undyed wool bore marks of long wear, and the only attempts to relieve its pure utilitarianism were crudely stencilled or blocked designs in a dark brown pigment at hem and neck. Her only ornament was a necklace woven of copper wire. The skin of her arms, legs and face was brown from exposure, and her hair ill cared for. But despite the superficial neglect there was no slovenliness in her movements. They were quick and deft. With surprise he realized that she was much younger than he had thought at first. The shapeless dress had misled him, but as she stood where the light touched her face he could see that she was little more than a girl. He saw, too, a pair of alert, intelligent brown eyes with an expression, as they met his own, which was partly curiosity, and partly something he was at a loss to determine.

The leader of the Germans and the one who had brought him had gone out together, leaving the third and youngest member of their party on guard. He looked about twenty-four or twenty-five, and a not ill-disposed young man. He was healthy and well developed without being burly, with a look of straight-forward honesty in his blue eyes. Though the fair hair was a trifle ragged in its trimming, the shave not

perfect and the uniform over well-worn, his manners suggested that the defects were due to necessity rather than carelessness. He politely informed Martin that for lack of table implements one had to make shift with a pocket knife, and inquired whether he minded smoke during the meal. Upon Martin's reassurance he deftly rolled some brown shavings into a leaf and lit them. An odor of autumn bonfires drifted through the room. Martin hastily offered a cigarette from his own case; it was accepted with gratitude.

Neither spoke again until the meal was finished. Martin, feeling the better for it, lit a cigarette for himself and set his elbows on the table. He looked thoughtfully at the other. The young German sat comfortably in one of the crude chairs. A large pistol holster at his belt was well in evidence, but his expression was not unfriendly, and there was a slight twinkle in the blue eyes as they met his own.

"Well, you're a cool customer," he said, and only a faint trace of accent told that it was not an Englishman speaking.

"Bluff," Martin assured him. "In reality I'm an extremely bewildered customer, but there's nothing to be gained by my registering bewilderment. However, I'd be very grateful if you would explain just what's going on. For quite a long time I thought it was a nightmare, but I don't seem to be able to wake up."

"It is a nightmare," said the other. "We've lived in it for six months."

"This place," Martin said, waving an arm to include both immediate surroundings and far horizons, "where is it? It is unfamiliar, and yet it is not; I could swear that I know that line of hills to the south."

"Probably you do. They are the Forest Ridges, and beyond them, a little to

the west, the South Downs."

Martin shook his head.

"That only makes the nightmare more nightmarish. We can't both be having the same hallucination. What's happened? What sort of unknown England is this? How can a countryside change in a flash from a well populated farming and residential area to a land of forests and squalid settlements?"

"I don't know," the German admitted. "There are several theories, but—well, most of us just try to accept what's happened and make the best of it."

"But that's what I want to know: what *has* happened?"

The other hesitated a moment, then:

"I don't see why I shouldn't tell you as much as we know. After all, you're in the same mess—you'll have to live with us and like us. . . . Can you spare me another cigarette, or are you treasuring them? You won't be able to get any more, you know."

"Go ahead!" Martin told him, offering his open case.

"OUR squadron," the German pilot began, "joined the main fleet soon after ten o'clock on the evening of November the 5th. Everything had been planned with precision. Just after ten we caught the first faint distant humming of the fleet. They were traveling fast. The noise grew quickly from a murmur to a throbbing, drumming sound which beat down upon us in waves. The whole world seemed to tremble with the noise of engines: never before had the sky been so full of sound. To hear it grow was exciting. One felt a surge of pride, a sense of overwhelming power at being part of such an irresistible force.

"As we flew on, other squadrons joined us. Sometimes they came in to the flanks; at others, when we passed directly over their aerodromes, we could

see them slide along the ground as they took off to climb after us.

"There was little radio communication, but as we approached the frontier, Franz, my observer, called to me that orders were for the whole fleet to extinguish navigation lights. The moon was up, giving a clear light. Our line stretched out many miles to my right. There were planes ahead of me, and planes strung out for miles behind: so great a number that as one looked across them there was a sense that we were stationary while the world revolved below.

"Before long we caught sight of the sea. It shone as brightly as the moon it was reflecting. Occasionally we thought we could make out ships like tiny dark specks on the spangled surface.

"Three quarters of the way across the order came to divide. The right wing altered course, and half the fleet fell away, bound for the industrial cities of the Midlands and North. The rest of us held on for the Thames estuary which would guide us up to London.

"The coast when it came into sight amazed us. We had expected that at least a late warning of our coming would reach England before we could hope to arrive. But it appeared that the English are indeed sometimes as casual as they would like others to believe. The coast towns were fully lighted; the lighthouses and lightships flashing as usual.

"We were dead on our course, and as we made the estuary we could see the glow of London painting the whole sky a dingy red in front of us. Before long we could see the massed millions of lights and signs which caused it. There was criminal negligence somewhere in the English service. Clearly no news had come through about us for not a district had dimmed. More amazing

still, not a single British plane had climbed to intercept us.

"Franz called to me in a worried voice. He did not like it. Failing any other information, he said, the sound detectors on the coast must have picked us up long ago, but not one gun had opened fire. He had a superstitious feeling that it was too easy.

"Six bombers with their fighters were detached to attack Chatham. We went on. London lay open to us. The bombers would be at work now long before enemy planes could reach anything like our height. I did not feel as Franz did. The glittering, careless arrogance of the city just ahead angered me so that I regretted that I was not handling bombs.

"We began to extend for action, and it was then that the incredible thing happened.

"My machine seemed to wrench and twist in a quite unfamiliar way. For a moment I thought that a wing had collapsed. It had not, but something had gone very wrong with the engine. It slowed suddenly, with a horrible grinding noise; the plane shuddered all through with the jarring, then the whole thing seized solid. Simultaneously there was a shout from Franz in my ear-phones.

"It's gone," he cried. *'Herr Gott! it's all gone.'*

"I LOOKED down. He was right.

Every one of the millions of lights had vanished. All was black save for the gleam of the moonlight on the curling river. It was uncanny, a blackout beyond belief. Not a glare from a railway engine, not a flash from trams or electric trains, no lights of moving cars or of craft on the river, no glow from factory chimneys.

"No bridges," shouted Franz.

"He was right about that, too. There was not a single bridge over the pale

Thames. Even the river itself looked different from the map I had memorized that afternoon. The turns were not the same, and there seemed to be lakes alongside it where no lakes should be.

"I glanced hurriedly round. A large number of planes seemingly in the same helpless state as ourselves was dropping down. I saw three falling in flames. Another, with a collapsed wing, fell past us and disappeared, twisting and turning beneath. Some had already hit the ground, their cargoes of bombs exploding with tremendous concussions. But still up above us was a mighty throbbing of engines telling that not all the fleet had been overtaken by the same fate.

"I turned my attention to making the best landing I could.

"We were lucky, Franz and I. I made a pancake. The soft ground tore off our undercarriage. The plane stood on her nose for a second, and then fell back. We had a nasty shaking, and I took a bump on my head. The next thing I remember was Franz offering me a flask.

"'Pretty good work,' he was saying.

"After a drink we lit cigarettes. We could still hear the sound of motors up above, but it was faint now, and as we listened it gradually died away. I felt forlorn as silence closed in on us, and so, I think, did Franz. And what a silence! It was as if the whole world were dead.

"Here and there was a glow of burning wreckage. Out on our right came a sudden new burst of flame. As we sat we could see the fire run across the fabric of a plane and take hold; for some seconds the frame glowed in ghostly outline before it collapsed.

"Franz and I looked at one another. We knew what that meant. Orders were to destroy one's machine if forced down in enemy country. Nevertheless, we hesitated. We felt that there was some-

thing here that our orders had not reckoned with: we both felt it. A sense that the catastrophe was in some way uncanny. I looked questioningly at Franz; he shook his head.

"'Let's get ready, but wait until they come,' he suggested. 'We can fire it at the last moment.'

"Franz looked to the radio in the hope that it might still be unbroken. As far as one could tell from inspection it seemed to have survived, but the aerials had been carried away, and it took him some time to rig up a makeshift. When he had done it and connected up his earphones he looked at me with a grin of satisfaction.

"'They're calling,' he said. 'We are not to destroy our plane, but are to report, and await further signals.'

"IN the morning the radio got busy again. The senior officer from each plane was to report personally to the Air Commodore if possible. But with every machine there must remain at least one man capable of destroying it if necessary and of tending to any injured. The Commodore's position would be indicated by a smoke signal.

"Five minutes later a thin column of greasy black smoke rose to the south-east of us. I made ready to go. Franz looked dubiously at the ice-rimmed pools among the tussocks.

"'Sooner you than me,' he said. 'Go carefully. It's the kind of ground that can swallow a man.'

"More than a hundred of us came to that meeting, and a more bewildered lot of men never gathered. But even that pitch of consternation was raised by the return of a party of scouts. They had been sent to the hilltop with glasses and instruments. They showed us on a map the position their reckonings gave. They were unanimous in their figures, but more bewildered than

we, for the point they had determined lay only a few seconds west of the Greenwich Meridian, almost on the Kent-Surrey border. Where the swamp and marsh stretched out toward the northern hills should have lain the city of London.

"One man who knew London well went further. He claimed that a hill upon which their glasses had shown them a cluster of huts among the trees stood in the exact geographical position of Ludgate Hill, and that a green mound further west and close beside the river was identical with the position of Westminster Abbey. Furthermore, observations taken with a range finder had supported him completely.

"The radio experts managed to get into touch with the part of the fleet which had not been forced down. It seems that after the sudden blackout about a third of our machines remained in the air unharmed. They did not understand what had happened to the rest of us, and were thrown into confusion. They lost their bearings, for though they could see the Thames, they could not identify any of the reaches. We gathered that there had been not only confusion, but a near panic. It was not clear who took command, but someone had ordered a retreat.

"On the way back they dropped many of their bombs in the sea to lighten the machines. They saw no ships lights. The Belgian coast was in complete darkness, and—most worrying of all—their radio could not make contact with their bases. The ether was dead save for communications between themselves.

"They crossed an utterly blacked out Belgium, flying entirely on their instruments. They crossed the Meuse still without answer from their bases. Beyond the frontier they found Germany as black as Belgium had been—incred-

ibly and deathly black. In spite of desperate messages, not a landing field was lit. Orders went out for the survivors of squadrons to make for their own aerodromes. The main part of the fleet headed on toward Cologne.

"They found the Rhine familiarly turning and twisting northward—but Cologne they did not find. Then petrol began to run short, and the last order was: 'Every man for himself.'

"Now they were in a worse state than we were. Most of the men had taken to parachutes and were scattered over a large area without means of communication. They believed that almost all their planes were total wrecks. The bomber in touch with us had been lucky. It was resting in the treetops two or three miles from Cologne—but where Cologne should have been there was nothing but dense forest."

CHAPTER VII

Unexpected Aid

THE German pilot went on to tell Martin of the days and weeks which followed, which resulted in this camp. Of how out of the early welter of speculation it was Ernst Gröner who emerged with the greatest following. He was a physicist of considerable standing, and unsubstantiated though his theories were, they did recognize all the known facts.

Gröner, basing his view on the conception of extra-dimensional time, held that it was no less possible theoretically to project an object into free-time than into free-space.

They had, he maintained, flown into something which had jerked them into another groove of time, or another part of the same groove.

As an explanation of the fact that some of the planes had suffered and

others not, he suggested that the instrument causing the jerk was some kind of active field, and that those which had encountered the field head-on had survived partly or entirely unharmed, while others, touching it obliquely and remaining for an appreciable period half in and half out of its influence had suffered since the revolutions of the two time phases, though similar, did not exactly coincide.*

That, Martin's informant admitted, was about as far as he had been able to follow Gröner's theory. The mathematical backing of his arguments, though it impressed those who knew about such things, had conveyed little to him.

Martin listened without comment. He had to be careful not to give himself away while at the back of his mind he was wondering how Judson would take the theory. It could explain a number of puzzling points. The notion of the slightly dissimilar rotation of the two time phases, for instance, offered a tenable explanation of the odd way in which the sticks held in the screen had been broken off. That sounds were

* Just as the expression "free-space" is inaccurate since a body situated in space must of necessity be held there by certain forces, so the expression "free-time" is inaccurate, or only relatively accurate. There would be stresses at work which for lack of a better word can be called time-gravitational attractions. If a rocket is shot into space at random it must either fall upon some sun or planet, or settle into an orbit determined by their pull; it would not be free. Similarly an object projected into space-time would not be free; it would gravitate to a certain point determined by the conditions of its projection. The mental image of time as progress along a line from a beginning to an end, such as lay in most people's minds, is a misconception and a barrier to a better understanding of its nature.

As a rough, though admittedly faulty analogy, instance the state of a gramophone which has been suddenly jolted. The machine still plays, the record is the same, the needle is still in the sound track—but it is in a different part of the track.—Author.

faintly audible through it might be due to air passing through in pulsations and thus transmitting the sound.

"And the natives?" Martin asked. "How do they take all this?"

"Oh, they don't like it at present, of course. You could hardly expect them to. So far we've been taking all the time, and we've not been able to give them any of the benefits of civilization in return yet. But they're a peaceful lot on the whole, and don't give much trouble."

Martin underwent a sudden change of mood. The utter impossibility of the situation came over him with a rush, swamping his acceptance entirely. He frowned.

"But this gets more fantastic than ever—I mean, it just can't be so. This is England, and I have no alternative to offer to the time theory. But if you are going to make these changes and build up a civilization there'll be something left to show for it; some signs of your influence are bound to remain."

"Of course. If not, why should we do it?"

"But they can't, they don't. Archeologists would have found at least traces of them."

The young man looked puzzled, then his face cleared. He laughed.

"Do you mean to say that you've been thinking that these dirty, hut dwelling savages are your ancestors?"

"But isn't that what you've been telling me?" said Martin, perplexedly.

"Heavens no, man. They're your descendants."

LOOKING up, I saw that the girl who had brought the food was standing some six feet behind the opposite chair. How long she had been there, listening, he could not tell. She caught his eye, laid a finger on her lips, and nodded at the back of the unconscious German.

Martin, glancing back quickly, saw that his momentary inattention had gone unnoticed. He made idle talk.

Out of the corner of his eye he was watching the girl. Not a sound betrayed her, but she was drawing closer to the man. In her hand she held a square of rough cloth. When she was directly behind him she paused and lifted the cloth. Martin edged forward on his chair, and sat ready.

The cloth fell over his head. Martin was round the table in a flash. His left hand grabbed the hand which went to the pistol holster. His right shot up to the man's jaw. There was weight behind it, and the other fell limply back in his chair. The girl backed half frightened across the room and beckoned him urgently. He delayed only long enough to take the pistol before he followed.

She led the way through the inner room, scrambled through its glassless window, and dropped crouched into the grass beneath. When he had joined her she raised her head and looked cautiously about, then, with a tug at his sleeve, she slipped away to the left and down the bank of the stream. Martin followed without hesitation, and bending low to keep beneath the level of the banks trudged against the current behind her.

They kept to the stream for two hundred yards or more, until they were well screened by the woods, then they climbed out on the further bank. Still the girl said nothing, but beckoned him on. After thrusting through a few yards of bushes they came upon a narrow footpath. She stopped and pointed along the path to the north and the hills behind. Then, still without a word, she turned and went back swiftly by the way they had come.

Martin stood without moving for some moments. The whole affair had

bewildered him by its suddenness and unexpectedness. What reason could she have for rescuing him, a stranger, from people who were, after all, more kin to him than she was? Yet her manner showed that she knew what she was about: lacking any other advice he could do no better than to follow hers. He started toward the hills.

A quarter of a mile further on a movement to one side of the path caught his eye. He leveled his pistol at the bushes.

"Come out of that," he ordered.

"You needn't shoot me, Martin," said Sheilah, as she stepped on to the path.

CHAPTER VIII

Sheilah's Story

"WE shall have to stop somewhere till it gets light," Sheilah said.

Little as he liked the idea, Martin had to assent. The light was failing fast: beneath the trees it was already so dark that the way was hard to see. They must be, he reckoned, about half-way up the hillside by now, though hemmed in by the trees it was little better than a guess.

The plan was to make for the hilltop first and then make west. When they were above the space where the annihilator stood they would turn downhill again and come to it from the north. It was a longer way round, but the certainty that the pursuit would have set out along the lower path as soon as Martin's escape was discovered forced them to take it.

They left the track reluctantly at a point where the trees were thinner. In a few moments they were safe from the chance sight of anyone using it, and Martin was breaking off small branches to make a couch.

"And now," he said, sitting down be-

side her, "perhaps you'll be kind enough to explain just what's happened—and how you come to be capering about in that fancy dress."

Sheilah looked down at her clothes. There was still light enough to show the clumsy, smock-like dress of unbleached wool and the crude, soft leather sandals on her feet.

"It's not becoming, is it?" she said. "But it couldn't be helped."

"Explain," demanded Martin. "This affair's gone all wrong. I set out as a rescue party of one after you; and end up by owing my own rescue to you. It's all thoroughly untraditional."

Sheilah chuckled.

"All right, but I expect you've guessed all the first part. How that great bearded brute suddenly appeared while I was experimenting, and dragged me through the screen after him?"

"Yes, I supposed that was about what had happened," Martin admitted.

"Well, the next thing I knew, I was sprawling on the grass. He'd fallen too, but he was still holding my wrist. After half a minute or so he got up and dragged me up with him. He stood staring at me in a puzzled way as if he didn't quite know what to do next. His mind evidently worked slowly, but mine was going quickly.

"I looked over his shoulder as if I could see someone coming, and he fell for it right away. As he turned his head I bent and bit his arm and wrenched my hand away. Then I turned and ran toward where I knew the screen must be. The yard or two's start I had should have been enough; it could not be much more than that from where we had fallen. In a few steps I should have come back on our own lawn, but I ran twice as far as I expected, and nothing happened.

"I stopped helplessly and let the man catch me, for I guessed why it was.

Somebody had heard me call, and the first thing he had done when he got to the lawn was to turn the projector off and destroy my chance of getting back.

"The bearded man was more careful after that. He kept hold of my wrist until we were well in the woods, and then he made me walk in front. We went quite slowly. He seemed to be dawdling on purpose: in fact, he was.

"After we had gone some miles and crossed a cultivated field he deliberately turned off the path and waited there till it got dark. Before we went on he tied my wrists together, put his finger on his lips, and pressed the point of a very sharp arrow against my back. We came into the village quietly and got to one of the huts not far from the bridge, without meeting anyone.

"It was a filthy hovel and the smell of the whole place was nauseating. He lit a few sticks in the fireplace to give us some light, then he made me sit down on a dirty pile of straw, and fastened my ankles together with coarse cord. After that he freed my hands and gave me something to eat: it was nasty stuff, but I was hungry, and I ate it.

"I found that I was less afraid of him now. Whatever he intended to do, he showed no signs of being ill-disposed towards me. Evidently he had some plan which involved keeping me hidden, and I tried to find out what it was.

"When I talked he listened with a puzzled expression. And I was as perplexed by his reply, for in amongst it I heard a few intelligible English words though they were twisted by an unfamiliar pronunciation. It wasn't easy to get meanings across, but we managed to make a few things clear to one another. I understood, for instance, that I was not to show myself outside the hut or it would in some way be the worse for me—though just what would happen was not at all clear. But I could

not discover what he intended to do, nor who he and his people were.

"After an hour or so he seemed to get tired of trying to talk. He tied my wrists together again, and with a final warning against being seen or heard, he left me. No more than two or three minutes after he had gone out a girl slipped in.

"She was the girl who helped you this afternoon. She stood in the middle of the beaten earth floor looking down at me with interest, but without surprise—which suggested that our arrival in the village had not been so secret after all. We faced one another for a while, then she began to speak carefully and, to my astonishment, in German.

"We talked for perhaps two hours. Many of the things I wanted to know she couldn't tell me, but she did explain a great deal which had been perplexing me. And I learned something about her.

"She was the wife, according to tribal custom, of the man who had brought me there. This hut had been her home until four months before when the three Germans had come. She could not tell me where they had come from, but by this time I had a pretty good idea. Not long after their arrival the leader had noticed her and suggested a change of domicile. Apparently without hesitation or scruples she had gone to the German, leaving her husband to shift for himself. She had, she said, never thought much of him, anyway.

"There was very little fuss about it. Whatever the village people think of the Germans' intrusion, they are awed by them and too much afraid of their weapons to object actively to anything they may decide to do. They gave a demonstration of pistol practice soon after they came, and that was enough to make even an outraged husband think twice before starting trouble. So

the girl continued to live peacefully with the leader.

"But that did not prevent her from keeping a prudent eye on her ex-husband's behavior. She had no idea what was in his mind concerning me, but she meant to find out. For the present she warned me against trying to escape. It was unlikely that I would succeed in getting clear of the village unseen, and if I did I should be unable to find my way through the forests in the dark. With that, she left me, promising to come again next day.

"The bearded man returned not long after she had gone. He barely glanced at me. After throwing some wood on the fire, he lay down on a pile of straw on the other side of the room and went to sleep.

"The next morning—this morning, that is—he got up early, gave me a bowl of a kind of porridge, ate some himself, and then went out. And that's the last I saw of him.

"It was after noon when the girl came at last. She said she had been delayed by the arrival of a new man whom the rest called an Englander. There wasn't much difficulty in recognizing you from her description.

"She had brought me this dress and sandals like her own so that I could at a distance pass as one of the villagers, and the only hesitation I felt about changing into them was on account of their being so very secondhand. It didn't take me long to do it, and then she was ready for us to leave—but I wasn't, quite.

"'Look here,' I told her in German, 'I'm as anxious to go as you are to get rid of me, but this Englander is a friend of mine. If I go, he goes, too. You've got to get him away somehow, or you don't get rid of me.'

"Apparently it never crossed her mind that the German might, if offered

the choice, prefer her company to mine. She had taken the opposite view flatly for granted, just as her ex-husband had.

"She looked distressed.

"'It will be difficult,' she said.

"'All the same, it's got to be done,' I told her. 'If you don't bring him to me, I shall come back.'

"And—well, it took her some time, but she did it. I don't know how, but you do, so it's your turn to do the talking for a bit," Sheilah ended.

IT was more than an hour after sunrise when they reached the smooth grass near the top of the hill. They climbed no more since there would be a risk of exposing themselves on the skyline. Instead, they turned west, keeping along the flank of the hill, a little above the tree level.

It was easy going over the open ground; a light breeze was in their faces and an early morning freshness put a better complexion on the world.

"Did the Germans tell you their tale of how this state of things came to be?" Sheilah asked.

"No," Martin admitted.

"Well, the girl told me. It's the story of the devil-birds who lived in the land beyond the sunrise. It seems that the devil-birds' lands were also overcrowded. The devil-birds had built nests on top of one another as the men had built their huts, but they reached the sky and couldn't go any further. They began to want to build and to lay their eggs in the lands this side of the sunrise. But the men said 'no.' They wanted all their land to grow food on for themselves and their children, and that the devil-birds would be shot if they came.

"But the devil-birds went on complaining about overcrowding and at the same time laying more eggs and hatch-

ing out more families until their land could not support them. Then they came across the sunrise. They came in flocks so huge that they filled the sky, and they roared with anger so that the whole world trembled. They spat fire onto the land below. So mighty were their droppings that the earth staggered as they fell and the piles of huts were shaken down. A vapour arose from the droppings so terrible that all who breathed it died at once. They scattered poison into the sky, and the sky poisoned the earth.

"Then the devil-birds went back, but the poison stayed. It was in the air, in the water, in the food. The skins of men and women who took the poison came out in black patches. They went mad, and died in agony—and the next day all their friends and families showed the black patches, and the braver ones killed themselves because they had seen what was going to happen. People died by the thousands, by the millions.

"Only a few small islands went untouched by the plague: places where the prevailing wind was off the sea, keeping the poisoned air away. The people on the islands shut themselves off from the mainland and from one another, and waited.

"Some of the smaller islands could not support their inhabitants, but any men who could be found brave enough to go to the mainland did not return. So the islands communities grew less, though they hung on.

"The legend says that it was several generations before at last a man returned to tell them that it was possible to live on the mainland again. Probably that's an exaggeration, but it implies a long time, and there were pitifully few of them left. Anyway, it shows you what I mean by the survivors of a civilization."

"Gas, disease-bombs, air-born bacilli," said Martin.

"Yes, a plague, started deliberately, and then getting out of control—probably by an unexpected mutation—so that it spread everywhere, wiping out its creators as well their enemies."

"Could it? It seems impossible. It may have been some local affliction greatly exaggerated—I mean, think of the tales of the flood. After all, it's only a legend."

"Only a legend," she agreed, "but it's a remarkable legend for a simple people to have invented. Have you a better means of accounting for all this?" She waved an arm to include the whole wilderness of forest.

They walked on for a time in silence.

"Then Juddy's Annihilator did not—will not—stop war," Martin said.

"No. It's just another new weapon to be counteracted," Sheila said.

"And the people in the village—I wonder if they will grow up just to destroy themselves in the end?"

"Who can say? Their minds may develop differently; they may lack suicidal will to war. They may consider the fighter a dishonorable man and a bad citizen. They may, unlike us, see their danger before it is too late."

"But you don't sound very hopeful."

"Hopeful! Why should I be hopeful? Hasn't civilization after civilization climbed up and then fallen down this sink of war? I thought that in helping Tommy I was doing something which might help to change all that—now I know I wasn't. It makes me feel that the whole stock is tainted." She turned to look up into his face. "I will marry you, Martin, if you still want me. But I don't think I want to bring children into this kind of world."

SHEILAH stopped, and pointed across the valley.

"This is far enough. You see those two hill crests exactly in line. That's how they look from the hill behind the house."

"There should be a path," Martin said.

She nodded. "I remember. It ran up the west edge. Let's look a bit further."

They found a track emerging from the tree belt a hundred yards further on. It was little used, but there was no other, and they took it.

The track wound to take advantage of open ground, and they passed cautiously down the sides of two spaces similar to, but smaller than the one they sought. At the edge of the third Martin stopped. He could see the head and shoulders of a man who stood in the open. Sheilah touched his sleeve.

"It's the man who caught me."

He nodded. The man had known where to come. There was not much to be feared from him alone; the question was, had he brought the Germans with him?

The projector, he remembered, was not far from the top end of the open ground. To make a way through the trees to the left would bring them nearer to it and also give a better view of the whole place.

The going was bad. Brambles and thorn bushes tore their clothes and faces. After a yard or two Sheilah's legs were lacerated and bleeding, and her hair was continually tangling in small branches. In spite of their care Martin felt that a herd of cattle could scarcely have made more noise. After twenty-five or thirty yards of zig-zagging to avoid the worst thickets he led the way downhill with still more caution. Sheilah kept close behind. Progress was slow and painful. At last he reached a point where it was possible to look out between the leaves.

He could see the double track of

dead branches he had laid to mark the path to the screen; the screen itself should now be between him and them if Judson had obeyed instructions and kept it up—a bare thirty feet from the top fringe of bushes. The bearded man was also visible.

Martin turned his head slowly to whisper directions to Sheilah. She rose on tiptoe to see the ground beyond, and as she moved a branch went off like a cracker under her foot. The effect on the bearded man was immediate. He waved an arm at someone out of sight further down the hill, and started toward their hiding place.

There was nothing for it but to make a dash. Martin flung himself through the last few yards of bushes. The oncoming man threw something which whizzed past his head; there was a thud just behind him. He fired wildly, and saw the man stop. He glanced back to see Sheilah lying where the missile had felled her.

As he picked her up he caught sight of the three Germans racing up the hill toward him, beyond the screen. Holding Sheilah, he ran headlong down the hill in their direction. He saw them come to a stop, looking puzzled. Then the sun seemed suddenly to leap higher in the sky. There was the same strange twisting fall that he had felt before. Trees and sky whirled before his eyes—and he dropped on a smooth lawn.

Martin scrambled to his feet, and staggered. There came one last message from the world beyond the screen: a bullet whistled past him, ricocheted from an iron seat, and broke a window in the house behind.

He reached swiftly for the switch. The red light winked out. The screen was down.

He picked Sheilah up in his arms, and walked to meet the men who were running from the house.

Science Quiz

A Matter of Choice

1. The instrument for measuring the size of the stars is the—(1) Hydrometer, (2) Galvanometer, (3) Interferometer, (4) Sclerometer.

2. One of the following is spelled correctly. Which one?—(1) Menangitis, (2) Menangitis, (3) Meningitis, (4) Meningitis.

3. A heavy rotating wheel that is resistant to gravity is called (a-an) (1) Gerfalcon, (2) Gyroscope, (3) Gynophone, (4) Auto Gyro.

4. The name Georgium Sidus was first given to the planet—(1) Jupiter, (2) Neptune, (3) Uranus, (4) Mars.

5. The Red Cross originated in—(1) Switzerland, (2) France, (3) United States, (4) England.

6. The person who found the x-ray was—(1) Koch, (2) Roentgen, (3) Planch.

7. The largest cavity of the heart is—(1) The left ventricle, (2) The right auricle, (3) Right ventricle.

8. The first person to use carbolic acid as an antiseptic was—(1) Jenner, (2) Pasteur, (3) Lister.

9. Marie Sklodowska was the maiden name of—(1) Florence Nightingale, (2) Clara Barton, (3) Madame Curie.

10. The first person to administer ether for an operation was—(1) Wells, (2) Trudeau, (3) Morton.

Match These!

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| () 1—Streptococci | () 6—Calorimeter |
| () 2—Corpuscles | () 7—Pith |
| () 3—Operculum | () 8—Retina |
| () 4—Trachea | () 9—Frond |
| () 5—Genetics | () 10—Chlorophyll |

A—An instrument for measuring the amount of heat in foods.

B—The green coloring matter in plants.

C—The study of heredity.

D—A soft spongy tissue in the center of plants.

E—Spherical bacteria in the form of chains.

F—A part of the eye.

G—The leaf of a fern.

H—Red and colorless cells in the blood.

I—A lid or flap covering the gills of fishes.

J—The windpipe.

True and False

1. Malaria fever is transmitted by the anopheles mosquito. True.... False....

2. The Dick Test is used for determining scarlet fever. True.... False....

3. The largest artery in the body is the pulmonary artery. True.... False....

4. From the freezing point on the Fahrenheit scale to the boiling point there are a hundred degrees. True.... False....

5. The reason mercury is used in thermometers is because it does not evaporate readily. True.... False....

6. Heating air makes its humidity lower. True.... False....

7. Absolute zero is 273 degrees below 0 degrees centigrade. True.... False....

8. A person who is nearsighted should wear convex glasses. True.... False....

9. The manufacture of carbohydrates by green plants in the presence of sunlight is called photosynthesis. True.... False....

10. When a solid is said to be malleable it is meant that it is possible to draw it into a wire. True.... False....

Men of Science

1. When you hear the word "relativity" you immediately think of, (1) Mendel, (2) Gay-Lussac, (3) Einstein.

2. At the mention of "cosmic ray" the first person to come to your mind is, (1) Priestly, (2) Eddington, (3) Millikan.

3. The "Father of Medicine" is, (1) Hyprocrites, (2) Apollo, (3) Galen.

4. The discovery of vaccination for smallpox is credited to, (1) Reed, (2) Jenner, (3) Pasteur.

5. The cure for tuberculosis is associated with, (1) Trudeau, (2) Harvey, (3) Malphigi.

Name Quiz

1. A hollow metallic instrument used for giving forth sound is also the name of the man who invented the telephone. It is

2. The plural of a slang expression meaning a thief or criminal is also the name of the man who invented the radiometer and the othescope. His name is

3. The man to first use nitrous oxide in an operation was named His name also suggests an adjective meaning, "having length."

4. The word expressing the action of water at 100 degrees centigrade, is also the name of an Irish chemist and physicist. He originated a law that is stated thus: The temperature remaining constant, the volume of a gas varies inversely as the pressure. His name is

5. A word meaning "correct" is also the name of two brothers who were pioneers in the field of aviation. Their name is

(Answers on Page 145)

QUESTIONS — and — ANSWERS

This department will be conducted each month as a source of information for our readers. Address your letters to Question and Answer Department, AMAZING STORIES, 608 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

Q. Please explain the difference between the "parallax" and the "triangulation" method of measuring the distance of the planets. Are any of the 800 planetoids able to support life?—Franklin Williams, Glendale, California.

A. The "parallax" of a planet is not a method of determining its distance, but the apparent semi-diameter of the earth, as seen from the body. It is triangulation that gives us the distance, by determining the angle at the earth, from two different observations. There are two methods of measuring the parallax of a star or planet. The *absolute* and the *differential*. The absolute method consists of making precise observations of the star's right ascension and declination with the meridian circle at different times through the course of an entire year, applying corrections for precession, aberration, proper motion, etc., and then examining the deduced positions. If the star is without parallax, these positions will agree. If the star has a sensible parallax, they will show, when plotted on a chart, an apparent annual orbital motion of the star in a little ellipse, the major axis of which is twice the star's annual parallax. The differential method consists of measuring the annual displacement of the star, with respect to other small stars near it in apparent position. This is the phenomenon we notice when riding on a train, when nearer objects seem to shift position with reference to other objects further away, in a definite variation, according to distance. As for life on the planetoids, it isn't likely. However, we really don't know.

* * *

Q. What is the mean apparent diameter of the moon, and its real diameter?—K. Westley, Montreal, Canada.

A. The mean apparent diameter of the moon is $31' 7''$. Thus, computing with the known distance, its real diameter comes out 2,163 miles. This is 0.273 of the earth's diameter.

* * *

Q. How is it possible to test for purity in oxygen?—M. C., Dubuque, Iowa.

A. Oxygen, when pure, is recognized by the fact that a splinter of wood, glowing at one end, bursts into flame when introduced into the gas. Only one other gas, nitrous oxide, behaves similarly.

* * *

Q. How much dissolved material is there in ocean water?—A. Dwight, Butler, Wisconsin.

A. The amount of dissolved material in sea water has been determined to be 3.6 per cent.

* * *

Q. How is the air tested for moisture?—John Sibley, Lincoln, Nebraska.

A. The presence of moisture in air may be shown by placing any deliquescent salt, such as calcium chloride, in an open vessel. The quantity can be measured by driving a known volume of air slowly through a weighed tube containing dry calcium chloride. It may be ascertained also by noting the temperature to which the air has to be cooled before it becomes saturated and deposits fog or dew. For example, if air at 18° has to be cooled to 11° before it deposits dew, it contains water vapor at a partial pressure of 9.8 mm. If saturated at 18° , it would have contained water vapor under a partial pressure of 15.4 mm. Its relative humidity was therefore 9.8, 15.4, or 63.6 per cent.

* * *

Q. How many horsepower in a kilowatt?—B. N., Canyon, Texas.

A. A kilowatt is 1.341 horsepower.

* * *

Q. Does glass become negatively or positively charged when rubbed vigorously?—Allen Manning, Los Angeles, Calif.

A. Glass becomes negatively charged when rubbed with catskin, but positively charged when rubbed with silk. If two glass disks having different degrees of polish are rubbed together, the disk with the rougher surface will be negatively charged and the other will be positively charged.

* * *

Q. What is a vector, and what is a scalar?—V. L., Chicago, Illinois.

A. A vector is a quantity which is completely specified by a magnitude and a direction. A scalar is a quantity which is completely specified by a magnitude. Advanced mathematics are necessary to deal with these quantities.

* * *

Q. How would radio operate in space where there is no air to carry the vibrations?—Miss Helen Patterson, 628½ Gardinia St., West Palm Beach, Fla.

A. Radio waves are vibrations in the ether, not the air, and do not depend on an atmosphere to convey themselves from place to place.

DISCUSSIONS



AMAZING STORIES will publish in each issue a selection of letters from readers. Everybody is welcome to contribute. Bouquets and brick-bats will have an equal chance. Inter-reader correspondence and controversy will be encouraged through this department. Get in with the gang and have your say.

A SCREAM!

Sirs:

I enjoyed the August issue very much. It contained a number of fine stories, especially the Bloch tale, *Mam Who Walked Through Mirrors*, and while we're on the subject, Bloch's offering in "Meet the Authors" was a scream! I really got some chuckles out of that photograph. About the covers: It's good to see Morey back. I would like to see him as the regular front-cover artist with Krupa and Fuqua on the inside illustrations.

Other good stories in the August issue were Arthur R. Tofte's satire, *Warrior of Mars* and *World Beneath Ice* by Polton Cross.

George Aylesworth,
Box 508,
Mackinaw City,
Michigan

● Mr. Bloch will be glad to learn you liked his story and his "pitcher."—Ed.

ABSORBING AS BLOTTING PAPER

Sirs:

It's really a shame I'm such a rapid reader, for I find I have nothing more in this month's AMAZING to read except the advertisements! To say the least, if AMAZING's pages were made out of blotting paper, the magazine couldn't be more absorbing than this latest issue! Yes, I guess you're correct by saying you have the leading magazine of its type in the field.

However, nothing's perfect, you know. No, not even AMAZING! Why? Well, AMAZING STORIES could improve itself somewhat by: 1) Smooth edges; pages all the same uniform size; 2) At least two interior illustrations to a story; 3) less unnecessary printing on the front cover, and 4) a different type of quiz.

The illustration done for the story "Wives In Duplicate" was one of the best I've ever seen in AMAZING! Where does Krupa get his inspiration? Mmmmmmm.

I've often wondered why the Motion Picture industry doesn't take advantage of some of these splendid stories that have come out, and really go to town on a large scale film. Technicalities could be overcome. I just don't see why! Could some one kindly enlighten me??

Thanks for FANTASTIC; it's III!

Byron G. Ingalls, Jr.,
30 Main Street,
Foxboro, Mass.

● Don't you worry about the Motion Picture Industry. They'll tumble soon, and when they do, you'll see AMAZING STORIES right up there, with some of its classics on the silver screen, coming to life!—Ed.

TRUCE!

Sirs:

For a change, this is going to be a friendly letter!

The back-cover by Paul was fine. His works, since his return from retirement, have lacked that certain punch which proclaims to the world: "This-is-by-Paul!" but that back-cover has rehabilitated him in my esteem. Here's hoping he can once more regain the title of "Science-Fiction's Best Artist," while in your service.

Ye gods et petit poissons!!!!!! (as friend, Bert Castellari, would say) you are bringing back our pal Leo Morey!!! (and!) although you may not have known it, "More Morey" had been the watch cry of the "J.A.S.F.C.C." Good for you!

There are still two other major problems to be settled before we get real friendly, but these will be discussed all in good time.

Next, I wish to thank you for printing my numerous requests in your Correspondence Corner. I have gained several valuable pen-friendships and started a local club through notices printed therein. One is really surprised by the number of "important" fans who use its services.

Well, that ends the truce. (We shall now resume conflict.)

Hoping for better stories in the future,

William Veney,
11a Lawson St.,
Paddington,
Sydney, N.S.W.,
Australia

● Thanks for your kind comments, friend-enemy from down under!! It makes me Veney-happy! Now, may I predict that when you read some of the forthcoming stories, you'll simply be forced to get real friendly?—Ed.

A NEW FAN

Sirs:

I have just finished the July issue of AMAZING STORIES and although this is only my second s-f magazine, I am already an AMAZING fan. The other mag. was *Fantastic Adventures* and it is a good one too. I have one complaint. It is this:

Why on earth did the story "The Man Who Walked Through Mirrors" stop when it did. I was just getting interested and besides fourth dimensions are my meat. Is there any more of the story and if there is, is there any way I can get it? You see I want adventure combined with every kind of gadget that has any possibility (Scientifically I mean). Also Time Machines are good reading to me too. I like stuff like that, so see if you can't get one like it soon.

Frank Wilkinson,
43 E. Noble St.,
Stockton, California.
"ISMS"

Sirs:

A Dictatorship cannot be a Democracy. Yet, in Polton Cross's story "World Beneath Ice" he claims that Rod Blake's regime was a "Democratic Dictatorship." Impossible! An amusingly foolish declaration for even a fiction story.

I am happy I have observed no stories in AMAZING promoting the detestable "ISMS" as I have in numerous other science fiction magazines. They are hasely taking advantage of an uncensored press.

Gene Thornton Newsome,
1503 Lincoln Avenue,
Norman, Oklahoma.

● You can be assured AMAZING STORIES will present no "isms," although several of our past stories have been taken by our readers as a bit of "preaching on the side" by our authors. When this occurs it is only because the author presents a concept of a future possibility, and its effect on the future. Perhaps even this will not get by in the future, so authors please note!—Ed.

BACK COVER PAINTINGS

Sirs:

Via the ubiquitous s-f grapevine I have just learned of the success of the s-f pictures-for-framing campaign. Hurrah!

I think every fan who wrote you about it deserves to be congratulated; and I think something is due you, too, for acceding to the readers' wishes and throwing your support to the business as you now have.

But we have come to the dividing of the ways. For now there are several questions to be thrashed around and ironed out. And since there will be little agreement in the stands that fans will take on these questions, it will present another problem to the editor: culling out the opinions and wishes of the majority.

Question one. The editor may settle this one himself, or may have settled it already. Shall we have the pictures on the back cover of A.S. or F.A.? Since the original idea was to frame the pictures, the larger magazine would be the more acceptable one. And printing the pictures thereon would present but two disadvantages: (1) the magazine in question is a bi-monthly and (2) the editor may not wish to break Paul's series, which is already scheduled. I don't know, of course, just

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how often you've decided—that is, if you have decided—to print said pictures. As for myself, I want as many as possible; but don't sacrifice quality for quantity! Remember, everyone wants a good picture.

Let's get on to question two. What artists? This is very important—the most important question, now. I feel the artists should be chosen on the basis of what the subject of the painting is to be. You, the editor, with the help of the readers, should decide that question. And your decision should rest on the past work of the artist—especially his recent past work (no paradox intended). Moreover: keep the artistic criterion high!

I hope you will not limit the selection of illustrators to those that have appeared on A.S. and F.A. only. To insure variety—therefore satisfying a greater number of fans—choose a variety of artists. And please, s-f artists only.

Two things that should be avoided in these paintings are (1) monsters and monstrosities of every kind. They tend to make pictures both ridiculous and repulsive; (2) backgrounds of bright toxicemic reds, billious yellows, sulfurous greens, flat blues. While their use on the front covers of magazines as an eye-attractor is permissible, I don't think it would be easy to justify their inclusion in a picture that is supposed to be artistic. And one other thing: (3) steer clear of machines. I have never been able to fathom the fascination that a mere machine (as a machine) seems to have for some people. To me, it is ridiculously silly.

In closing, I've one thing to say. To author J. Harvey Haggard, who took the time to write many letters to many fans, and who is responsible for initiating the expanding into a glorious, real fact of what might have remained but the germ of an idea forever, a cheer! Long may he write! Perhaps, even now, we do not realize what heights this idea will ascend to—AMAZING STORIES, co-operating, may be making s-f history. It has come a long way since April, 1926, and has yet a long way to go. I don't know the one who made this saying, but I think it apt: "Ideals are like stars; though we cannot grasp them, we, like the sailors, can use them for our guides." I think this campaign grew from the contemplation of an ideal. Don't you?

Langley Searles,
19 E. 235th St.,
New York, N. Y.

● Looks very much like the readers have swamped us, taken over the editorial reins, and rayed our objections out of existence. As for the grapevine, it surely is effective. Now, since the readers have just finished putting on the hottest campaign we've seen in years (what's happened to the fans? Has AMAZING STORIES really pepped them up so much? We feel a bit proud if we have) we'll have to get down to cases and see what really is to be done.

First. This is going to take time. Our F.A. back cover series is so popular we can't ignore our readers there. It must continue. But we can't

ignore our readers on this "covers for framing" demand either. On A.S. we have the smaller size, which seems to be a point our readers bring up as "against." So, that leaves F.A. Let's handle it this way. We'll publish a list of artists, and let the readers vote on which one they'd like to see paint the first "cover for framing." Then, when it's ready, we'll present it on F.A., sans lettering, except for a title, in small type, or in a hand that can be removed. We'll also run a full page (as we always do) on the painting and its subject, which could be cut from the magazine, pasted to the back of the picture as it hangs on your wall. Paul's series could be continued on the following month or two, while the readers vote for the second artist on the list and his painting is completed. And so on. We might let the artist himself paint a science-fiction scene or subject which he best likes to paint. Or we might think up a new series into which each artist could fit. As for F.A., we might have an announcement in the near future as to monthly publication if reader demand continues.

On this issue, if you have noticed, we have presented the lettering in such manner that *this* cover can be framed by enthusiasts. We'll try to do this as often as mechanically possible. Also on the latest F.A., the same policy has been followed.

Here's the list of artists: (who's going to be first?) Brown, Fuqua, Krupa, Paul, Morey, Wesso, Frew, Schneeman, Rogers, Thompson, Gladney, Scott, Sigmund, Duffin, MacCauley, Finlay, Binder.—Ed.

SHE STARTED EARLY!

Sirs:

I want to compliment you upon producing such a grand magazine as AMAZING STORIES. It seems that every issue is better than the preceding one. I have seldom read a story that I did not enjoy, and you have some very good artists.

I am fifteen years of age, and have been reading science-fiction magazines for about five or six years.

Keep up your good work!

Eva Schaeffer,
Happy, Texas

● Certainly we have feminine readers! Even cowgirls (?) and we're "Happy, Texas" about the whole thing.—Ed.

A YOUNG READER

Sirs:

In your Sept. issue, "The Underground City" is by far the best story. I list the remaining stories as follows:

2—"When the Moon Died." I take "Wives in Duplicate" in the August issue to be a sequel to this.

3—"Beast of the Island."

4—"The Fate Changer."

5—"Rocket Race to Luna."

6—"Face in the Sky." This story was your one big mistake in the whole issue. It was too fantastic to suit my taste. Mr. Ayre states in his story that there being no wind in space, the face would not be mucked up, however, if there was

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no wind in space how could the face have been formed by dust particles in the first place?

Now for the illustrations. In "Beast of the Island" you show MacGlennon and Welford as having some sort of a sub-machine gun or rifle.

Now please tell me how could a man carry a sub-machine gun, as illustrated, in his pocket?

I read in a recent issue in Discussions of a reader in Australia who had built a small rocket plane. I have been experimenting with rockets and hope to build a successful one of my own soon.

Eric Roloff (11 years old),
Moon Valley Farm,
Flat, Missouri.

● The face in the sky was formed by the collision of a meteor with Pluto, which threw a lot of pulverized dust into space, which formed the accidental outline of a face. Illuminated by sunlight, this barium dust glowed and became visible. It needed no wind to put it there, only the impetus of the meteorite. You are right, Welford and MacGlennon carried no sub-machine guns. We'll be more careful about this.—Ed.

CORRECTION—RADIUM IS RIGHT

Sirs:

In the September issue of AMAZING STORIES you state, in an item entitled "Cost of Atomic Power"—"Coal is ten dollars a ton. Uranium, to compete, would have to sell for \$2.50 a gram. And the cost of producing a single gram is no less than \$25,000!"

Looks to me like as if you got your wires crossed. The price you state for Uranium is about the current quotation for Radium. If, however, you are serious, let me know just how many grams of Uranium you will take at \$25,000 a throw, and I'll go up to my claim and become enormously wealthy by filling your order. You see, at \$25,000 a gram, I can dig the stuff out by hand, refine it with chemicals bought retail at the corner drug store, and send it to you air mail, and still clear something like \$24,950 on each gram I handle—and the mine isn't a good one, either. Last time I got a quotation, concentrates containing 60% U₃O₈ were worth only \$1.00 a pound, F.O.B. Boulder, Colo.

Ronald L. Ives,
1091 14th St.,
Boulder, Colo.

● This is an error. The fact is, Uranium is cheap, and it should have been radium in the article.

LIKES CARTOONS

Sirs:

I like very much the idea of running science-fiction cartoons like you have had in Fantastic Adventures and Amazing. Both so far have been good, and slick paper magazines all along are thinking such cartoons worth publishing.

"The Trial of Adam Link, Robot" was a little carelessly done in several places, such as the use of the magical Habeas Corpus, and did not have

a great deal that was different from the original story; however, it is a good thing to have such stories often, to counteract the "Frankenstein" attitude of so many people.

"When Time Stood Still" was the best story you have published in a long time. Mr. Sloat has done exceedingly well.

John A. Bristol

CORRESPONDENCE CORNER

William Dugan, 1417 E. 53rd St., Cleveland, Ohio, would like to exchange picture postcards and geological specimens. 18 yrs. old. . . F. W. Fischer, 2313 Laurel Ave., Knoxville, Tenn., would like you to insert following: "F. W. Fischer, 2313 Laurel Ave., Knoxville, Tenn., has for sale practically all scientification which has appeared since 1910, excerpted from Munsey Publications, Weird Tales, and all the scientification mags." . . Stanley C. Field, 2030 S. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles, Calif.—Anybody sending matchbook covers from their state will receive some in return from him. . . Philip Tobenkin, 3348 Kempton Ave., Oakland, Calif.—Very anxious to obtain May 1927, Volume 2, No. 2 issue of A.S. in good condition with covers intact. Willing to pay 50c for this copy. Also like to obtain in good condition the summer 1931 edition, Vol. 4, No. 3 of A.S., quarterly for 75c. . . Jack Townsend, Box 604, Wilson, N. C.—11 Issues of SCIENTIFICATION to sell, dating from Aug., 1938, to June, 1939. Will sell each for 15c or \$1.50 for all. . . Allen R. Baker, 356 E. 140th St., Cleveland, Ohio.—Are organizing a club devoted to interests of S.F. in Cleveland—all readers of A.S. living in Cleveland and vicinity are invited to contact him immediately for further discussion. . . Jack Heaton, 113 Ormond St., Brockville, Ont., Can., would like Nov. 1938 A.S.—first issues of certain science fiction magazines and weird magazines—Will pay double prices for each. . . Geo. Parke, 412 E. 1st St., Canton, So. Dak.—He forgot to enclose address last time he wrote—is 17 yrs. old. . . Virgil E. Gipson, Jr., 314 W. South St., Aurora, Mo., wants pen pal around 16 or 17—collects stamps and coins. . . Earnest R. Omev, 617 Herrick Ave., W., Wellington, Ohio, will try to find S.F. story in any S.F. magazine. If interested write him. . . Richard H. Ryan, 940 Main St., Haverhill, Mass., has all copies of A.S. and quarterlies from first issue up to and including Dec. 1936—also has back issues of all other scientification magazines. Willing to dispose either singly or in sets—all in good condition. . . Eva Schaeffer, Happy, Texas, would like to correspond with a few science fiction readers, especially foreign. . . Eric Rolaff, Moon Valley Farm, Flat, Mo., would like correspondence with boys interested in chemical physics and biology. . . Tom McKitch, Camp 6, Youbou, B. C., Canada, would like to correspond with people of any age, either sex, interested in philosophy, telepathy, God, the universe, and the mysteries of life and death.

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AMAZING STORIES, 608 S. Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois

In my opinion the stories in the October issue of AMAZING STORIES rank as follows:

| | No. Here |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| HISTORY IN REVERSE..... | |
| RETURN OF SATAN | |
| THE MISSING YEAR | |
| THE ICE PLAGUE | |
| THE PRIESTESS WHO REBELLED... | |
| JUDSON'S ANNIHILATOR | |

Name

Address

City State

Attached is my letter of 20 words or more, on my reason for selecting story number one for that position. ☐ Check here.

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MERIT AWARD

THIS month we award our regular monthly prize to Polton Cross, for his excellent story, "World Beneath Ice" in our August issue. Congratulations, Mr. Cross, for winning your second monthly award. You are the first of our writers to be awarded \$50.00 for the second time, for a story of especial merit.

Also, with our August issue, we began the policy of awarding \$10.00 to the reader whose ballot came closest to being identical to the winning line-up of stories for the month, and who wrote the best letter of 20 words or more telling why the leading story was selected as such. To Mr. Chester Woodrow, 183 Indiana Ave., Shenandoah, Pa., goes our check, and our congratulations. Your listing was identical to the final result, with one exception, the first two stories were reversed.

In winning the award, Mr. Cross polled 1,701 votes out of a possible 2,376. The entire listing is as follows: (percentage figures are based on votes, 100% being perfect).

| Title | Votes | Rating |
|---|-------|--------|
| 1. World Beneath Ice | 1701 | .72 |
| 2. Warriors of Mars | 1467 | .62 |
| 3. The Man Who Walked Through Mirrors | 1404 | .59 |
| 4. Wives in Duplicate | 1395 | .59 |
| 5. Mystery of the Collapsing Sky- scrapers | 1224 | .52 |
| 6. John Hala's Hollywood Mystery .. | 1125 | .47 |

In this issue we repeat our usual offer of \$50.00 for the best story in the issue, and continue the policy of awarding \$10.00 to the reader whose vote is most similar to the final line-up, as published at the close of each monthly contest. Winning entries must include a letter of 20 words or more, on the reason for selecting the winning story of the issue.

Use the coupon at the top of the first column on this page to vote on this month's stories. Its removal will not delete any story or article. However, if you prefer, a reasonable facsimile, in the same order as printed in the coupon, will suffice.

ATOMIC POWER PLANT

ON our back cover this month we see artist Howard M. Duffin's conception of what the atomic power plant of tomorrow may look like. In reality, this conception is remarkably accurate, and we may expect to see plants of this type become actualities, when the experiments of physicists of today are successful.

The mystery of why atoms don't explode spontaneously and destroy the universe is still puzzling scientists. There are atoms whose nuclei contain over 200 positively charged particles, protons packed close together, and all repelling each other. What keeps them from flying apart?

Dr. Merle A. Tuve, attached to the department of terrestrial magnetism, believes he has a clue to this mysterious cohesive force, and has been trailing the clue by firing protons at one another, and determining the force necessary to make them collide, and destroy their repellent force. He has a new type atom smasher, which towers five stories in the air. It looks like a gigantic steel pear, standing on its small end. Inside its hollow metal shell is a 26-foot porcelain tube, with a hollow steel ball 19 feet in diameter perched at its top. With this machine he gets a 6,000,000 volt lightning flash. And that can do a lot to a poor helpless proton. In an underground chamber beneath the cyclotron, various substances are being placed under electrical bombardment.

Now what might we expect from his success? First, such power plants as we have pictured, would instantly make obsolete the most modern and efficient of electric power plants. Niagara Falls would become a grossly inefficient and expensive means of producing power. There would be a whole new set-up in power production which would take great financial and executive ability to throw into line without great turmoil in the business world. But this would be overcome, and power would be available to the world on a scale never before dreamed possible.

A plant such as the one shown would provide enough power to run a city the size of Philadelphia, at a cost so far below that now extant, that every family could afford to operate a completely atom-powered home.

Industry would find at its disposal, vast power reserves, which would revolutionize every mechanical device.

Cities would become daylight places at night. Lighting would be incredibly cheap, and much more effective. New inventions in the mechanics of lighting devices would result, and no longer would the dark impede operations in cities. The myriads uses of light, in great power, would be multiplied, until perhaps even such far-fetched things as interplanetary communication would be possible, from an Earth standpoint.

Travel and transportation would be revolutionized. Tiny cyclotron motors, no larger than the present-day motor, would make it possible for an auto, or a locomotive, to travel for years on a few ounces of some cheap material. Aviation especially would benefit, with weighty fuel eliminated, and size limit virtually non-existent.

A slightly darker prediction looms out of the possibility of atomic power being utilized in war machines, and in destructive weapons. Certainly it would be a potent factor, and instantly, all present armaments would be obsolete. There is no telling how potent atomic bombs, so long used by fiction writers in destroying future civilizations, might actually be. Certainly, a few grams of any element, bursting into complete and instantaneous atomic breakdown, would release power so terrible that entire cities might be blasted away.

However, perhaps the sheer potency of atomic power may place the final curb on war that must someday come. Who can tell? At least, it is certain that atomic power, when it does come, can, by common sense control, become the greatest boon man has ever had.

QUIZ ANSWERS

(Quiz on page 136)

A Matter of Choice

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| 1—Three | 6—Two |
| 2—Four | 7—One |
| 3—Two | 8—Three |
| 4—Three | 9—Three |
| 5—One | 10—Three |

Match These

- | | |
|-----|------|
| 1—E | 6—A |
| 2—H | 7—D |
| 3—I | 8—F |
| 4—J | 9—G |
| 5—C | 10—B |

True and False

1. True.
2. True.
3. False. The largest artery is the aorta.
4. False.
5. False. Because it expands uniformly.
6. True.
7. True.
8. False. He should wear concave glasses.
9. True.
10. False. It is possible to hammer it into thin sheets.

Men of Science

- 1—Einstein. 2—Millikan. 3—Hypocrites. 4—Jenner. 5—Trudeau.

Name Quiz

- 1—Bell. 2—Crookes. 3—Long. 4—Boyle. 5—Wright.

Meet the Authors

JOHN BEYNON

JUDSON'S ANNIHILATOR

Author of

IT is a pleasure for the author to meet the readers—or, at least, to renew the brief acquaintanceship of a number of years ago—though he is sorry in a way that he could not do it in a more optimistic mood.

It was Mr. H. G. Wells who somewhere in his multitudinous writings inadvertently generated the germ of this story by a remark to the effect that:

"The military caste always regards the scientist as a kind of gifted inferior."

In pondering that I came to the, to me, surprising conclusion that it was justified.

The militarist does not like war, for one thing it interferes too much with the proper organization of professional soldiering; but particularly he does not like modern war, for he is notoriously conservative. Who is it, then, who has driven him gradually and reluctantly all the way from the bow to the big gun, from the broadsword to the bomber? Why, the scientist. Who is one of the chief drawers of royalties when the soldiers get blown up? The scientist. Who is it who should be the priest of progress, but is content to behave with the irresponsibility of a half-wit? That same chap again who blandly and quite unashamedly tries to shuffle the blame and evade the issue—"Why blame me? I only sold the child a gun; somebody else ought to have stopped him shooting his mother."

And so, I found myself in the peculiar position of agreeing with the military point of view. The scientists' brains have built the twentieth century; their morals will blow it to bits. As workers and intellectuals they inspire respectful awe; but as citizens of the world—well, they just are not.

Thus, when I began to plan this story I found that there was no need to use that hoary old standby, the mad scientist, and I wondered why anyone ever did when the reputedly sane scientists are quite efficiently getting on with the job of world destruction before our eyes. One could even make Judson think that he was saving the world, with precisely the same result.

It may be that I am misled and that Science will develop some kind of social conscience—but I have always been a bit doubtful about miracles and last minute rescues. At present it would be an exceptional scientist indeed who, having invented a general disintegrator, would not sell it to some fool to use tomorrow.

However, since optimism rises eternal (if somewhat long range) one hopes that in the next civilization, if any, there may, perhaps, be a hody of Science with some glimmering idea of responsibility for the forces it handles.—*John Beynon, London.*

ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS

RETURN OF SATAN

Author of

THIS morning, I am fresh out of autobiographical data. Besides, I have a sneaking suspicion that most of you lads already know all you want to know about me. If you don't, I suggest you look me up in the July issue of *AMAZING STORIES*. If the dirt I dished out there doesn't satisfy you, I will be glad to write the story of my life and mail it to you on a postcard. Or on the back of a stamp.

In *RETURN OF SATAN* I touched on a subject that to me is extremely fascinating—the possibility of civilization's having existed on earth prior to the present. There can be little doubt that several thousand years ago, some sort of a civilization flourished on a continent or on islands that are now beneath the waters of the Pacific. It vanished, leaving behind it vague traces that are now a source of confusion to the historians.

What happened to that civilization? How did it originate? How high did it climb?

There are hundreds of questions that could be asked, but the answers are few and far between.

Perhaps, sometime in the future, research may reveal the answers. Perhaps traces of still older civilizations may be discovered. Who knows the true history of the past of this puzzling planet?—*Robert Moore Williams, Chicago, Illinois.*

FREDERIC ARNOLD KUMMER, JR.

Author of

THE ICE PLAGUE

"THE ICE PLAGUE" is the result of an unseasonable heat-wave. We Baltimoreans were cursed with hot weather during supposedly halmy May, and thereupon arose a hridge-table discussion as to how pleasant a snow-storm would be. Like wishing for ice-skating in Hawaii, my partner grunted, in a let's-get-back-to-hridge sort of tone. It was an hour later before he got in his two-hid, however. Ice in Honolulu was too intriguing a topic. After deciding to use it as a basis for a story, I was undecided as to whether the attacking orientals should freeze the entire Pacific and march across, or be content with hottling up the U. S. fleet while retaining the use of their own to cover a landing. The latter course struck me as the more plausible since the possibility of keeping an army supplied during a six thousand mile march across ice-fields appeared remote. Moreover, it would prevent their own fleet from operating, while the laying of cables across such a distance seemed improbable. So I confined my activities to Hawaii and feel that the story is more plausible as a result.—*F. A. Kummer, Jr., Baltimore, Md.*

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ABSOLUTELY NOT! THE ATLAS DYNAMIC TENSION SYSTEM MAKES MUSCLES GROW FAST!

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An actual, untouched photo of Charles Atlas, twice winner of the title, "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man" — who offers you this 7-DAY TRIAL OFFER.



J. G. O'BRIEN
Atlas Champion
Cup Winner
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MEN—Meet J. G. O'Brien, of California, one of my Silver Cup Winners! Look at that strong neck—those broad, handsome, perfectly proportioned shoulders—that muscled chest and stomach. Read what he says: "Look at me NOW! Dynamic Tension WORKS! I'm proud of the natural, easy way you have made me an 'Atlas Champion'!"



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This valuable cup stands about 11" high on a black mahogany base. I will award it to my pupil who makes the most improvement in his development within the next three months.

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systems are sluggish for lack of proper exercise—to help them tone their entire body, inside and out.

Just give me a week! Make me prove—in even that short time—that continuing with my Dynamic Tension method will make a New Man of you—give you bodily power and drive, and put you in magnificent physical condition which wins you the envy and respect of everyone.

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